ACT NOW TO ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV) IN PRISONS

THE PROBLEM

We are falling behind in global goals set to eliminate HCV by 2030. Achieving it will be impossible if we fail to address the inequities around treatment of HCV in prisons.

HCV prevalence among people in prisons is extremely high, estimated at 13-26% vs. 1% in the general population.

However, persons who are incarcerated do not receive equitable access to HCV prevention, testing, and treatment.

Strengthening HCV care in prisons is urgent, both as a human rights issue and as a necessary public health intervention to stop transmission of HCV worldwide.

THE SOLUTION | 10 steps to accelerate HCV elimination in prisons

INHSU Prisons, a Special Interest Group of the International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU), and the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination (CGHE), co-convened a workshop of global experts to identify practical, high impact actions countries can take to improve HCV care in prisons.

1. Spread the message that “prison health is community health”
2. Address stigma and discrimination through investing in strong patient advocacy, peer navigators, and prison staff education and training
3. Present the economic, human rights, and public health imperative to policymakers and prison officials
4. Explore innovative financing approaches to ensure access to HCV treatment in prison settings
5. Implement innovative and best practice testing, treatment and community linkage programs including rapid and reflex testing, to ensure all persons progress along the cascade of care to cure
6. Set global, national, and local targets for HCV screening and treatment in prison settings and track progress
7. Adopt routine, opt-out HCV screening policies upon entry to prison settings and invest in person-centered training for staff
8. Expand needle and syringe programs and opioid substitution therapy within prison settings to reduce transmission
9. Invest in strong surveillance systems that track the number of HCV infections, persons screened, and persons treated for HCV in prison settings
10. Explore innovative financing approaches to ensure access to HCV treatment in prison settings

Read the full report here

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