



CALIFORNIA

1. Plan Development

California has published its Ending the Epidemics plan that addresses HIV, HCV, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the state. The plan will be in effect from 2022-2026, it has been made available to the public, and people with lived/living experience were involved in its development. Although the state has not committed to publishing progress reports for its plan on an annual basis, its new plan does indicate the state intends to hold itself accountable to certain milestones (although more clarity is still needed as to what those milestones are). As we previously recommended, more clearly defined benchmark goals to assess progress related to HCV elimination efforts should be created.

2. Harm Reduction Laws

Syringe Services Program Legality, Syringe Exchange Specifications, Medical Emergency Laws, and “Works” Possession Laws and Syringe Exemption

SSPs are authorized by statute in California, and the exchange of syringes can operate on a needs-based approach. There are laws in place to protect Good Samaritans who attempt to assist others that are experiencing a substance use-related medical emergency, and there are protections in place for the person experiencing the emergency. Although the possession of syringes is illegal, there is an exemption in place for syringes acquired from SSPs, which aids the state’s outreach to key at-risk populations and expands harm reduction efforts.

3. Budget Allocation

Specific Funds Allocated for Plan Implementation, State Budget, and State Corrections Budget

There is a mention of viral hepatitis in the state budget allocations for the upcoming FY 23-24 budget, but unlike in prior years, the upcoming fiscal year corrections budget does not include specified line items for viral hepatitis.

4. Improving Viral Hepatitis Prevention, Treatment, and Outcomes

Educational and Perinatal Information for the Public, Provider Training, and Medicaid Expansion

The state does provide educational information to the public regarding viral hepatitis and specifically perinatal HBV and HCV. Additionally, the California Department of Public Health (DPH) provides a Primary Care Provider toolkit and the University of Washington provider training on its website, among other resources. California is also a Medicaid expansion state.

Standard of Care for HCV in State Corrections

A publicly available, separate, state-drafted guidance for the standard of care for HCV in state corrections does not exist in California. We recommend that the state explicitly describe the standard of care that should be adhered to pertaining to this matter within its facilities.

Targeted Interventions for Key Populations and the Provision of Linguistically Diverse Informational Materials

There are state academic institutions and community-based organizations throughout the state providing targeted interventions for key populations, such as persons who use drugs and those experiencing homelessness.

Enduring Coalition / Task Force to Coordinate and Leverage Resources

It is unclear whether CalHEP is currently active; however, the California Integrated Strategic Plan Workgroup worked to create and publish the state's newest elimination plan.

Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Grade

Despite ongoing retreatment restrictions that should still be addressed and removed, California's Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access grade has slightly improved since July 2022 from a B to an A.

5. Improving Viral Hepatitis Surveillance and Data Usage

Epidemiological Report / Profile, and Public-Facing Website with Viral Hepatitis Data

California's Department of Public Health was previously providing regularly updated viral hepatitis epidemiological data (between 2016 and 2018) and had previously published an epidemiological report for HAV, HBV, and HCV on its website. However, this data has not been updated since 2020 and is therefore no longer current. The state's DPH should strongly consider publishing a more current report and listing more current data on its website as it becomes available.