



NORTH DAKOTA

1. Plan Development

North Dakota has not yet published a viral hepatitis elimination plan. The state is expected to publish a plan by 2025 in accordance with CDC PS21-2103. If North Dakota has not already done so, the state should convene a group of multi-disciplinary stakeholders to guide these efforts, which will ultimately improve its viral hepatitis strategies and outcomes.

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 law in North Dakota, they function on a needs-based policy, which is the preferred exchange policy, and there is an exemption in place for the possession of syringes acquired from SSPs. Additionally, there are Good Samaritan protections in place to protect those who call 911 to help others or themselves who need emergency medical assistance.

3. Budget Allocation

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

North Dakota’s FY21-23 budget mentions allocations for viral hepatitis, but it is not mentioned in the state corrections budget, and there is no mention of viral hepatitis in the state’s next proposed biennium budget. Continuing to designate a line-item for hepatitis would signal a commitment to providing resources to support ongoing efforts to improve statewide viral hepatitis outcomes.

4. Improving Viral Hepatitis Prevention, Treatment, and Outcomes

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

North Dakota is a Medicaid expansion state; the state distributes viral hepatitis educational information and materials and provides perinatal information / education for HBV, but not information for perinatal HCV. Training for providers is linked through the North Dakota Department of Health Website. Links to Hepatitis B and C Online are located there, as well as HepatitisCure Webinars, and the ability to participate in a “Lunch and Learn” series hosted by the Division of Sexually Transmitted and Bloodborne Diseases.

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 that includes strategies to offer DAA treatment for HCV to all persons with a confirmed HCV diagnosis held in state corrections in accordance with the AASLD/IDSA treatment guidelines does not exist in North Dakota. There also has not been litigation in North Dakota regarding proper guidance for treatment of HCV in corrections.

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

The NDDOH Division of Sexually Transmitted and Bloodborne Diseases program offers hepatitis C testing to vulnerable populations with the counseling, testing and referral (CTR) program. CTR sites aim to inform clients of their hepatitis C status, provide counseling and support for harm reduction, and help to secure needed referrals for treatment and care.

Enduring Coalition / Task Force to Coordinate and Leverage Resources

The CTR program mentioned above is cross-cutting and includes providers from local public health units, substance abuse and treatment centers, ND community action organizations, ND family planning sites, pregnancy clinics, correctional institutions, homeless shelters, institutions of higher education, community health centers, sexual health clinics, tribal health services providers, and more. It is all housed within the North Dakota Department of Public Health and aims to help increase access to care and provide other counseling and supports. This is a valuable program to serve the state's most vulnerable populations. This program, however, does not appear to meet the criteria for a Coalition working to advance elimination planning and interventions as defined in our rubric.

Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Grade

North Dakota's Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access grade remains a D. A significant number of restrictions remain in place to the access of services and treatment still in place, including substance use and retreatment restrictions and the requirement of prior authorization.

5. Improving Viral Hepatitis Surveillance and Data Usage

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

North Dakota successfully maintains a data dashboard on a public-facing website that provides current demographic data (total case counts) for HAV, HBV, and HCV through 2023. The state released a 2021 comprehensive epidemiological report in September 2022 that included HBV and HCV data.