



OHIO

1. Plan Development – Possible Plan Development

Ohio has not yet published a viral hepatitis elimination plan, but we are aware that the development of a plan is currently underway. The state is expected to publish a plan by 2025 in accordance with CDC PS21-2103.

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 Ohio, and they function on a needs-based policy, which is the preferred exchange policy, but there are caveats that must be met in order to be exempt from penalty for possessing syringes acquired from SSPs. The requirement is: “An SSP participant can only avoid prosecution for possessing a syringe if they are “within one thousand feet of a program facility and is in possession of documentation from the program identifying the individual as an active participant in the program.” This is highly contradictory, since the state allows SSPs to function but still leaves a gap for participants to be punished. Ohio should remove these caveats. Additionally, the Good Samaritan protections in place to protect those who call 911 to help others or themselves who need emergency medical assistance also hinge on being applicable only if “the person making the call is not on ‘community control or post-release control.” This limitation decreases the number of people able to receive protection under these laws and may deter some individuals from acting to help others or themselves. To prevent further injury or the loss of life, the state should remove these qualifications.

3. Budget Allocation

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

Ohio’s FY22-23 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 budget (FY24-25). 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

Ohio is a Medicaid expansion state; the state distributes viral hepatitis educational information and materials and provides perinatal information / education for HBV, but not for perinatal HCV (it provides this information in multiple languages though). Training for providers is offered under the “Resources” tab of the Ohio Department of Health’s website.

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 Ohio. There also has been no litigation in Ohio regarding this matter to direct proper guidance either.

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

The Ohio Department of Health Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative provides technical support and guidance for the prevention and control of hepatitis C virus (HCV) in Ohio. This initiative seeks to improve the delivery of hepatitis prevention services in healthcare settings and public health programs that serve at-risk adults and adolescents by integrating viral hepatitis messages and services into existing programs. Consultation is available to local public health, private providers, healthcare facilities, community agencies, substance abuse treatment centers, correctional facilities, and the general public.

Enduring Coalition / Task Force to Coordinate and Leverage Resources

The work of the Coalition of the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Hepatitis Surveillance program and Hepatitis Prevention Initiative should be praised. Together, they provide technical support and guidance for the prevention and control of hepatitis in Ohio and ongoing and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of population-based information about people diagnosed with non-perinatal hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and hepatitis D virus (HDV) in Ohio.

Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Grade

Ohio's Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access grade remains at a C. Significant number of restrictions to the access of services and treatment are still in place, including 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

Ohio does have a 5-year report for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C each on a website controlled by the Ohio Department of Health. The data only goes up until 2021 though, and the reports are not overly comprehensive. The state, in conjunction with the Hepatitis Prevention Initiative, should consider updating this data as soon as it becomes available and publishing a more comprehensive epidemiological report (that also houses all viral hepatitis data within the same report).