

April 21, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the 124 undersigned organizations representing patients, providers, and public health organizations, we urge Congress to adopt legislation to eliminate hepatitis C. There are very few opportunities for the health care community and Congress to partner to eliminate a devastating disease, but hepatitis C presents one. With an oral medication that cures over 95 percent of patients in just 8 to 12 weeks, the tools are available to save the lives of many Americans if Congress acts now.

At least 2.4 million people in the United States are chronically infected with hepatitis C, a “silent killer.” Chronically infected individuals may be asymptomatic for years while the virus damages their liver. Left undetected and untreated, hepatitis C may progress to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and potentially even death. Liver transplantation is the only rescue therapy available to those who develop the complications related to cirrhosis, but is an expensive and limited option. Every year, one of every five persons on the waiting list for liver transplantation, die or become too sick to undergo the transplant. Diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C can avoid all those downstream consequences—for every one million people cured of hepatitis C in ten years, 34,000 cases of liver cancer, 2,500 liver transplants, and 24,000 deaths can be prevented.

The high number of individuals unaware of their disease status, the barriers to screening and treatment, and the cost of these medications are the primary impediments to hepatitis C elimination. However, Congress can act to address these challenges, save the lives of many Americans with hepatitis C, and reduce the significant health costs associated with treating patients with liver cancer and liver transplants.

President Biden’s Fiscal Year 2024 budget request outlines a plan to eliminate this curable this virus by:

- Supporting the development of point-of-care diagnostic tests to enable a test-to-treat model;
- Broadening access to curative hepatitis C medications, primarily through a national subscription model; and
- Expanding infrastructure needed to reach, test, and treat all affected individuals.

Besides these components, the plan would also accelerate research to find a safe and effective vaccine for hepatitis C, so that the next generation of Americans will be protected from this serious disease. The

White House requested a mandatory authorization—an investment of \$12.3 billion—for five years. This investment will be offset by \$7.2 billion in savings, primarily by the reduced Medicaid program and drug costs, for a net cost of \$5.1 billion and incalculable benefit to the millions of lives that will be saved, particularly among our most vulnerable populations who are disproportionately affected by this virus. We have seen a similar approach taken by the state of Louisiana that has made a great deal of impact in reducing the number of people with hepatitis C.

This plan provides a blueprint to save lives and reduce federal healthcare spending. The time to act is now before hepatitis C progresses to more costly and complicated liver diseases for many Americans. We stand ready to work with you to eliminate hepatitis C for all Americans and respectfully request that Congress develop and pass legislation to authorize this hepatitis C elimination plan immediately.

Sincerely,

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
Access Support Network
Africell SL
AIDS Alabama
AIDS United
Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Association of College of Pharmacy
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Gastroenterology
American Gastroenterological Association
American Liver Foundation
American Pharmacists Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Society of Transplantation
APLA Health
Arizona Liver Health
Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association at the University of Texas Medical Branch
Asiana Liver Center at Stanford University
Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges
Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Bienestar Human Services
Black Coalition Against COVID
Breadcrumb Analytics
California Hepatitis Alliance
California Hepatitis C Task Force
Caring Ambassadors Program

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation
Central City Concern
Check Hep C at Montefiore Medical Center
Choose Healthy Life
Clary Strategies
Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination at The Task Force for Global Health
Community Access National Network
Community Education Group
Community Liver Alliance
Council of Medical Specialty Societies
CWJ PLUS, LLC.
DAP Health
Empire Liver Foundation
End Hep C SF
Facente Consulting
Faces & Voices of Recovery
Global Immunization Action Network Team (GIANT)
Global Liver Institute
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center
Health Brigade
Health Services Center, Inc.
Hennepin Healthcare
Hep Free Hawai'i
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis C Association
Hepatitis C Task Force for Los Angeles County
Hepatitis Education Project (HEP)
Hepatitis Education, Awareness and Liver Support or H.E.A.L.S of the South
HepFree KY
HIV Medicine Association
Hope on Ttapp
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Association of Hepatitis Task Forces
International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU)
Joy Southfield Community Development Corporation
Kaleida Health
Kentucky Rural Health Association, Inc.
La Maestra Community Health Centers
Legacy Community Health
Liver Coalition of San Diego
Liver Health Initiative
Mid South Liver Alliance
Midwest Asian Health Association
Milken Institute

Missouri Network for Opiate Reform and Recovery
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Clinician Consultation Center
National Consumers League
National Harm Reduction Coalition
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
New York Recovery Alliance
NEXT Distro
North American Society For Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology & Nutrition
Northwestern Medicine
Ohio Hepatitis Academic Mentorship Program (OH-HAMP)
Open Biopharma Research and Training Institute
Pharmacist planning service
Project ECHO: Hawaii Learning Groups
Project Weber/RENEW
Providence Centralia Hospital
Public Health Division - Oregon Health Authority
Radiant Health Centers
Rady Children's Hospital/University of California San Diego
Safer Together
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco Department of Public Health
Sonoran Prevention Works
Southwest Recovery Alliance
Sun River Health
Sunray Drugs Specialty
The AIDS Institute
The Bonnie Morgan Foundation for HCV
The Giving Back Foundation
The Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group-HCMSG
The Porchlight Collective SAP
Thomas D. Boyer Liver Institute, University of Arizona
Treatment Action Group
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
University of New Mexico
UNM Medical Group, Inc.
Urban Survivors Union
Utah Hepatitis Coalition
VOCAL-WA

West Virginia Hepatitis Academic Mentoring Partnership
Will Rodgers Liver Health Foundation
Women of a Certain Age
Yakima Neighborhood Health Services

cc: Chair Ron Wyden, Senate Finance Committee
Ranking Member Mike Crapo, Senate Finance Committee
Chair Bernie Sanders, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
Ranking Member Bill Cassidy, Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
Chair Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Committee
Vice Chair Susan Collins, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chair Dick Durbin, Senate Judiciary Committee
Ranking Member Lindsey Graham, Senate Judiciary Committee
Chair Jason Smith, House Ways & Means Committee
Ranking Member Richard Neal, House Ways & Means Committee
Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Chair Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Committee
Chair Jim Jordan, House Judiciary Committee
Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler, House Judiciary Committee