



Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Treatment in the Vermont Department of Corrections

On December 4, 2017, DVHA sent an update to Medicaid providers that required "cure" medications to be considered regardless of F score.¹ For HCV treatment, Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) lead to a cure when the medications are taken as prescribed as measured by follow-up labs and "sustained viral response." Previously, only patients with a score of F2, F3, or F4 were considered candidates for "cure" treatment medications.

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) has an obligation to ensure that inmates receive health care that is consistent with "prevailing medical standards." 28 V.S.A. § 801. In September 2018, the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services, Al Gobeille, appeared before the Joint Fiscal Committee to discuss the provision of HCV care within DOC. During this testimony, he acknowledged that DOC was not fully delivering the prevailing standards of care and pledged that the Department could and would do better. The Secretary also asked for \$2,000,000 to be appropriated pursuant to Secs. C.106.2 and C.1000(a)(14) of Act 11 of 2018 Special Session to allow DOC to treat inmates with the prevailing medical standard of care.

HCV Treatment from September 2018-Present

Since that time, we are pleased to inform the committee about the tremendous strides and achievements made by DOC and its staff. Since September of 2018:

- 227 individuals have received clinical care, evaluations and workups; which are pathways to curative treatment for HCV.
- 83 individuals in the Department's custody have received curative Directing Acting Antivirals (DAA).

For fiscal year 2019, total expenditures to treat individuals with HCV will be approximately \$1.50 million-\$1.65 million (of the \$2 million allocation for fiscal years 2019 and 2020). This estimate is based on invoices received through April 30, 2019 totaling \$1,097,963.69 to treat these individuals with HCV. Invoices for May and June will be approximately \$400,000-\$550,000.

We believe that the persons in our care must be treated humanely and consistent with the prevailing standards found in the community. To that end, the DOC treatment protocols for HCV patients have been informed by— and validated by— the Vermont Department of Health and UVM's Infectious Disease clinic. The protocols we have implemented are based upon best practices and meet the community standards of care.

¹ F Score is a measure of fibrosis in the liver, as measured by fibrosis ultrasound. F scores are integers and range from 0-4. 0 indicates no fibrosis and 4 indicates the presence of cirrhosis.