

# Wiping Out Hep C in New Mexico

www.nmhepc.org · P.O. Box 6601

Albuquerque, NM 87197

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## President's Message

Welcome to The New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance, a non-profit all-volunteer-run organization that advocates for equal access to quality hepatitis C treatment, information, education, prevention, and support services for all individuals in our state.

Hepatitis C is one of the most common causes of chronic liver disease and affects an estimated four to five million people in the United States. You may be one of an estimated 32,000 New Mexicans living with Hepatitis C, or you may be looking for ways to support someone you know who is infected.

Knowledge is power and prevention can happen through awareness. The Alliance is committed to raising public awareness of the hepatitis C virus (HCV); to helping all New Mexicans learn if they are at risk; and to teaching people how to stay healthy if they do have the virus.

We invite you to join us in our efforts to minimize the negative social, economic and medical impacts of hepatitis C on our state.

Stay healthy and stay informed,



## Are You At Risk for Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is spread primarily by contact with blood and blood products. Blood transfusions and the sharing of used needles and syringes have been the main causes of the spread of HCV in the United States. Since 1992, transfusion-related hepatitis C has been replaced by injection drug use as the most common risk factor for contracting the disease.

Others at risk include health care workers who suffer needle-stick accidents and infants born to HCV-infected mothers. Groups who appear to be at slightly increased risk for hepatitis C are: people with high-risk sexual behavior, multiple partners, and sexually transmitted diseases; people who snort cocaine using shared equipment; people who have shared toothbrushes, razors and other personal items with a family member that is HCV-infected.

*There are patients who get hepatitis C without any known exposure to blood or to drug use.*

## We Cannot Do What We Do Without You!

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their recent donations to the Alliance

*Lynn Cravens · Yona & Isaac Dickmann*

*Sue Anne Gradisar · Phyllis Kaplan*

*Susan & Edmund Kibel · Hannah Levine*

*George & Edith Lowy · Lori & Hal Luft*

*Irene & Roger Munz · Robert Seamon*

*Tom Seamon · Lucy Yates*

The Alliance welcomes all contributions, including in-kind services. Donations are tax deductible and are our primary source of funding.

## We Salute Our Partners

New Mexico Department of Health  
(NMDOH) Hepatitis Program

New Mexico Department of Health  
(NMDOH) HIV and Hepatitis  
Epidemiology Program

University of New Mexico Health Sciences  
Center (UNM-HSC), PROJECT ECHO

## Wiping Out Hep C in New Mexico

is published monthly September through June by the New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance, Inc. (NMHCA). The newsletter is accessible on our website, [www.nmhepc.org](http://www.nmhepc.org). To contribute an article or send a letter to the editor, please email us at [info@nmhepc.org](mailto:info@nmhepc.org) or send to NMHCA, P.O. Box 6601, Albuquerque, NM 87197.

Board of Directors: Gabriela de Boer, President; Stephani Patten, Vice President; Billie Lattanza Treasurer; Terry Holmes, Secretary; Karen Gonzales; Jeff Hammond; Larry Manthey; Julie Morrow; Rachel Pacheco; Laura Tomedi; and Lucy Yates

*The Alliance is organized and incorporated under the laws of the State of New Mexico as a non-profit corporation for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, without profit to any officer or director.*

## You've Just Been Diagnosed With Hep C...Now What???

Coming to terms with your diagnosis is not easy, but there are some practical steps you can take to move ahead with your life:

1. Give yourself plenty of time. Don't expect to come to terms with your diagnosis immediately.
2. Learn all you can about HCV. Although Hepatitis C infection isn't rare, most people don't know much about it. As you learn about the disease, you empower yourself to make informed decisions about your care.
3. Participate in a support group. Sharing your feelings and fears with others can decrease your feelings of isolation, and also provide practical advice for day-to-day coping.
4. Use a journal to document your progress. If you tend to be obsessive, capturing your feelings and thoughts on paper can help you to "let go" and decrease anxiety.
5. If you are compulsively using alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, or any other pursuit to avoid your emotions, stop. If you can't stop, get help.

For more information on coping with your diagnosis, visit <http://www.hepatitisneighborhood.com>.

## Calendar of Events

NMHCA Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at the UNM-HSC PROJECT ECHO Teleconference Center at 2:30 pm.

The Hepatitis C Support Group at the University of New Mexico Hospital is held on the third Tuesday of every month at 5 pm in the Manzano Room (2nd floor behind the cafeteria).

## Alliance Identifies Goals and Priorities In Three Year Strategic Plan

At the November meeting of the NMHCA Board of Directors, the Strategic Plan which had been formulated at the September Annual Meeting was adopted with revisions. Following are the primary goals and priorities that the Alliance plans to address in the next three years.

**PRIORITY #1: COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS.** The Alliance strives to serve as a visible face and clearing-house for public awareness of HCV by expanding culturally appropriate community education to help all New Mexicans learn if they are at risk, how to stay healthy and prevent the spread of HCV, and how to find local resources.

**PRIORITY #2: OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND TESTING FOR HIGH RISK POPULATIONS.** It is our goal to improve early diagnosis of HCV status by expanding outreach programs that offer education and testing to the populations at highest risk of HCV infection, including injection drug users (IDUs) and other substance users, incarcerated individuals, and others involved in the criminal justice system.

**PRIORITY #3: ADVOCACY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS:** The Alliance wants to improve statewide HCV education, services, policies, and legislation through strong and visible advocacy and education with elected officials and policymakers that are delivered by a diverse and inclusive Alliance of consumers, affected populations, community leaders and stakeholders, as well as strong partnerships with other New Mexico organizations.

**PRIORITY #4: ENHANCED AND EXPANDED SERVICES** We hope to ensure access to quality, state-of-the-art, confidential HCV treatment, support and other services for all parts of New Mexico, including rural areas, through provider training and improved linkages among agencies.

Any interested NMHCA members may participate in the committees working on realizing these goals. To learn about benefits of membership or to obtain a membership application, go to our website -- [www.nmhepc.org](http://www.nmhepc.org) -- or write to us at NMHCA, P. O. Box 6601, Albuquerque, NM 87197. You may also visit the NMHCA yahoo groups website to learn more.



NEW MEXICO  
HEPATITIS C  
ALLIANCE

**OUR MISSION:** To create, coordinate and inspire participation in the "parade" that will bring individual, community, state, and national awareness and resources to hepatitis C prevention and treatment

**OUR VISION:** A compassionate, non-judgmental society that ensures education and universal, equitable access to resources to prevent, manage, and cure HCV infection, and support all of those infected and affected by this disease