

# Wiping Out Hep C in New Mexico

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## A Word from the Vice President

We, as the New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance, have moved forward in ways that we did not envision just a year ago. We should be proud of where we were and where we are today.

### May is National and New Mexico Hepatitis Awareness Month!

The activities/programs that are now in place are advocacy work and training, a monthly newsletter, the Yahoo list serve being kept up to date with the files and calendar, a membership and partnership drive, our presence at health fairs, five planned Hepatitis C Awareness Days around the state, the web site that will be online this month, building alliances with other organizations and our champions, the first-ever NM Hepatitis C Quilt, and of course there is more.

And all this is because you care enough to make it happen. Personally, it helps me to regain my faith in our diverse cultures that are in this wonderful State of New Mexico. It is the strength of this diversity that will make New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance what we have envisioned it to be.

And, we are just beginning! I encourage you to take the risk, make the time, and invest in the future of those that are affected with hepatitis C in New Mexico. It is you and others like you that can and will make a difference, so please join and volunteer. There are many ways you can help that are easy and not very time consuming all the way to what ever YOU make of it. So help out with awareness, education, and supporting those that need our help.



## Some Thoughts on Volunteering...

The more you lose yourself in something bigger than yourself, the more energy you will have.

--Norman Vincent Peale

Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

--Helen Keller

## Advocacy Progress in 2007

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in the NMHCA advocacy letter for the 2007 legislative session! It was really great to get our feet wet in the legislative arena. Here's an update on how our very first letter to the state legislature:

- **Increase funding to PROJECT ECHO to increase hepatitis C treatment opportunities.**

Project ECHO received \$1.5 million in continued funding and \$400,000 in a one time funding measure. Not as much as we asked for, but still fantastic! YEA!

- **Medicaid coverage for substance use treatment.**

The bill didn't pass, but two memorials were introduced and both passed unanimously! The state will now apply to the feds to include substance abuse treatment as a covered service for Medicaid recipients. YEA!

- **Pre-trial diversion for nonviolent drug offenders.**

This bill was placed in the House Judiciary Committee and ran out of time, so it didn't pass.

- **The Buprenorphine Pilot Project at NM Women's Prison.**

This bill passed both houses but the governor didn't sign it, so this bill didn't pass.

- **Increase funding to the Department of Health Harm Reduction Program for hepatitis C prevention outreach to injection drug users.**

This wasn't a bill it was an urging to the finance

Continued on page 2 column 1

## 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.

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Advocacy News (continued from page 1, column 2)  
committee. Unfortunately, funding wasn't increased.

We did great this session, but there's still a lot to do! We need ideas for next year's letter and we need members who are interested in talking to their representatives outside the legislative session. If you are interested in changing policy that affects hepatitis C, join us at the Meet Your Legislators Workshop on June 16th. Fliers will go out over the email list, so keep an eye out.

Thanks!  
Laura Tomedi  
Co-chair, Advocacy Committee

**LEARN HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE**

**Mark your calendar**

**MEET YOUR LEGISLATOR TRAINING**

**Saturday, June 16, 2007**

**12 noon - 4pm**

**Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless  
1217 1st Street NW**

**(NW corner of 1st and Mountain)**

**SLAY THE DRAGON IN 2008**

One of the main impediments to awareness of hepatitis C infection is the time that passes between becoming infected and manifesting any symptoms. It can take 20, 30 or more years for symptoms to show up. That's why hepatitis C is often called the silent epidemic. Many people refer to it as "The Dragon." because it is like a dragon waiting in its lair until it has enough power and then it attacks. People with hepatitis C who fight the disease are often called "Dragon Slayers."

Those of us infected with the hepatitis C virus want more than anything to *slay the dragon*. Let's take a stab--or several stabs--at the sleeping dragon in our 2008 NMHCA Quilt. Details in the June newsletter.

*Gabriela*

**LOOK AT WHAT WE MADE TOGETHER!**



**THE 2007 NMHCA QUILT**

*Our first quilt includes 72 squares submitted by people from all over the state. The completed squares were returned to NMHCA president Gabriela de Boer, who sewed them together in record time to be ready for Hepatitis C Awareness Month in New Mexico. It was unveiled at the Hepatitis C Awareness Day in Roswell May 4. On May 12 it was displayed at the MacArthur Health Fair in Albuquerque and it will be in Espanola May 17. As hepatitis C continues to infect and affect thousands of New Mexicans, our quilt will travel across the state reaching out to all our communities with its message of awareness and hope. The quilt will serve as a powerful tool for healing, education, prevention and compassion. We plan to create a new quilt with a new theme annually. Many thanks to all those who contributed the heartfelt and beautiful messages of hope and love to the 2007 New Mexico hepatitis C Alliance Quilt Project. Arrangements to lend the quilt to interested groups will be made beginning in October, 2007.*



**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