

Using DIS in VH Programs Toolkit-Outline,

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The below items are intended to provide options and suggestions for implementation and job responsibilities of a DIS working with viral hepatitis, particularly among people who use and inject drugs.

What is a DIS and how can they benefit viral hepatitis investigations?

- DIS is most often used in STD intervention and prevention work, but has become more common within viral hepatitis. They have expertise with communication, interviewing, counseling, case analysis, provider and community engagement, patient navigation, and network building.
- Passport to Partner Services for DIS
 - The focus areas that may be helpful are:
 - Introduction to partner services
 - Communication skills
 - Interviewing
 - Field Investigation and Notification
 - Referrals and Linkage to Care
- Benefits of DIS in viral hepatitis
 - Communication skills help connect organizations and groups working with hepatitis to better leverage and support common goals
 - Interviewing skills to reduce stigma and ability to work with taboo topics. This also allows DIS to train others on these techniques.
 - Counseling skills to be able to provide hepatitis testing results, including discussion on harm reduction
 - Case analysis to be able to conduct epidemiologic investigations, including outbreak recognition and response
 - Communication and expert knowledge of viral hepatitis to engage partners and providers for any of the following: stigma for working with people who use and inject drugs, increasing testing services, provide support for linkage to care...
 - Patient navigation to link hepatitis C positive patients to care based on a more hands on approach, rather than referrals to care

Focusing on acute hepatitis surveillance

- Goals of acute surveillance & investigations
 - Increase hepatitis testing among at risk populations, specifically people who inject drugs (PWID)
 - Increase confirmatory testing for hepatitis C, specifically among PWIDs
 - Increase relationships between community members and LHDs, particularly those that may be stigmatized and intimidated to utilize these services
 - Solicit contacts of cases for testing to better reach hidden populations
 - Connect cases and contacts to community services
 - Increase linkage to care for hepatitis C treatment
- How to determine acute B/C hepatitis cases
 - Appendix for algorithm

- Seroconversion or elevated LFTs for both B/C

Opioid Overdose Prevention & Naloxone

- DIS also assumes the role of an opioid overdose prevention specialist and naloxone coordinator

Other services

- Vaccination for hepatitis A/B
- STD testing/counseling
- HIV testing/counseling
- Linkage to care
- SUD treatment referrals

Patient Navigation

If patients would like navigator assistance, DIS may provide the following services:

- Research prospective treatment provider referrals by geographic location and will work with Project ECHO, as available.
- Work with case/client to schedule appointments with provider.
- Send a reminder to case/client about their appointment.
- Follow-up with provider to ensure that client made it to appointment. Begin to establish rapport that provider will follow-up with HCV DIS directly if case/client does not show up. If case/client did not make it to appointment, follow-up and work on rescheduling. After three missed appointments, case/client will be lost to follow-up
- Work with provider and case/client to navigate patient assistance programs for medication.
- Work with pharmacy to ensure that medication is available and covered by insurance or patient assistance.
- Work with case/client to schedule follow-up appointments with provider.
- Ensure that labs are drawn to determine if HCV infection has resolved.

Stigma and harm reduction training

- Outline terminology
- National Harm Reeducation Coalition
- Consider hosting local harm reduction navigator trainings

Rapid HCV testing certification

Explain importance of ability to conduct rapid testing as well as provide results. DIS can be available to support partners, as needed, and/or train partners to develop independent testing within their systems of care.

Phlebotomy certification

Explain importance of RNA testing for hepatitis C virus, as well as additional testing for hepatitis B. If available, may also be able to draw for STDs and HIV. DIS can be available to support partners, as needed, and/or train partners to develop independent blood draw testing within their systems of care.

- A key part of this is working with local public health lab and funding confirmation testing to specific populations. For example, PWIDs who are antibody positive via rapid testing at syringe services

Key partnerships

- State or local public health lab
- Local health jurisdictions
- Community based clinics
- Syringe service providers
- SUD treatment centers
- Opioid treatment providers
- Corrections

Funding-Utilizing Opioid monies to leverage funding

- Break silos and work directly with opioid funded programs to support project activities as well as staff.

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