

England Set to Eliminate Hepatitis C Before 2030 Goal

Fewer people have registered for liver transplants and hepatitis C deaths have been drastically reduced.

December 5, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

The English National Health Service (NHS) is on track to eliminate [hepatitis C](#) virus (HCV) as a public health concern nearly five years ahead of the 2030 deadline set by the World Health Organization (WHO) thanks to direct-acting antivirals (DAAs). The [WHO defines](#) elimination of hep C as “as a 90% reduction in new chronic infections and a 65% reduction in mortality compared with the 2015 baseline.”

The DAAs, for which the NHS paid almost £1 billion (\$1.049 billion) in a deal with pharmaceutical companies Gilead Sciences, Merck & Co. and AbbVie, have been distributed to thousands of patients and have reduced the number of deaths from hepatitis C, [liver disease](#) and [liver cancer](#) by 35%. About 70,000 people have been cured of hepatitis C, which has reduced the number of people in need of liver transplants, according to an [NHS news release](#).

What’s more, within the last six years, requests for [liver transplants](#) have decreased by about two thirds. Annual registrations for a liver transplant in those with hepatitis C and related diseases fell from 140 per year to less than 50 per year in 2020.

The NHS also credits its success to a screening program launched in September that has diagnosed 80,000 people with hepatitis C and started them on treatment for the virus.

All of which means the NHS is poised to eliminate hepatitis C in 2025.

“These figures demonstrate the ability of the NHS to use its commercial capabilities and purchasing power to tackle population health challenges benefiting tens of thousands of people,” said John Stewart, national director for specialized commissioning at NHS England, in the NHS news release.

Hepatitis C is transmitted when the blood of a person with HCV passes into the blood of an uninfected person by, for example, sharing needles and other paraphernalia used to inject drugs. Direct-acting antivirals can cure more than 95% of people with hep C. When left untreated, HCV can lead to liver cancer, liver failure and death. The NHS recommends that patients get screened

regularly to ensure early detection and treatment of the virus.

To learn more, click [#Hepatitis C](#) or [Hepatitis C Transmission and Risks](#) page.

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