

WISCONSIN AIDS/HIV PROGRAM NOTES

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Focus on the Wisconsin Adult Hepatitis B Immunization Initiative

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Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a preventable communicable disease with serious health consequences, including cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. In adults, ongoing HBV transmission occurs primarily among unvaccinated persons with behavioral risk for HBV transmission (e.g., heterosexuals with multiple sex partners, injection drug users, men who have sex with men, and among household contacts and sex partners of persons with chronic HBV infection). Hepatitis B vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent HBV infection. This issue of *Wisconsin AIDS/HIV Program Notes* highlights the Adult Hepatitis B Immunization Initiative which is directed at increasing the HBV vaccination levels of persons at risk for HBV infection in Wisconsin.

Adult Hepatitis B Immunization Initiative

In late 2007 the Wisconsin Immunization Program received federal supplemental funds for the purchase of hepatitis B vaccine for an adult immunization initiative. The Wisconsin Immunization Program is working in close collaboration with the Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator in the Wisconsin AIDS/HIV Program and staff in the Wisconsin Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Program in implementing this initiative.

The primary goal of the Adult Hepatitis B vaccine initiative is to improve the delivery of viral hepatitis prevention services, including hepatitis B vaccine, in healthcare settings and public health programs that serve adults at high risk of viral hepatitis.

On December 6, 2006 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlined strategies for the elimination of hepatitis B in adults and made recommendations about which adults should receive hepatitis B vaccination, including:

Persons at risk for infection by sexual exposure

- Sex partners of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) positive persons
- Sexually active persons who are not in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship (e.g., persons with more than one sex partner during the previous 6 months)
- Persons seeking evaluation or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease
- Men who have sex with men

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Persons at risk for infection by percutaneous or mucosal exposure to blood

- Current or recent injection drug users
- Household contacts of HBsAg positive persons
- Residents and staff of facilities for developmentally disabled persons
- Health care and public safety workers with reasonably anticipated risk for exposure to blood or blood-contaminated body fluids
- Persons with end-stage renal disease, including predialysis, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and home dialysis patients

Others

- International travelers to regions with high or intermediate levels (HBsAg prevalence of $\geq 2\%$) of endemic HBV infection
- Persons with chronic liver disease
- Persons with HIV infection
- All other persons seeking protection from HBV infection

In addition, the CDC made recommendations regarding the settings where hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all adults. These settings include:

- Sexually transmitted disease treatment facilities
- Facilities providing drug abuse treatment and prevention services
- Health care settings targeting services to injection drug users
- Correctional facilities
- Health care settings targeting services to men who have sex with men
- Chronic hemodialysis facilities and end-stage renal disease programs
- Institutions and nonresidential day care facilities for developmentally disabled persons
- Human immunodeficiency virus testing and treatment facilities

Approximately 90 sites in Wisconsin are currently participating in the Adult Hepatitis B Immunization Initiative. These sites represent a mix of local public health agencies, methadone providers, correctional institutions, jails, STD providers, family planning clinics, community health centers, and community-based organizations. Both monovalent HBV and combination hepatitis A virus (HAV) & HBV (Twinrix) vaccine are available at no cost to provider sites. Additional agencies are encouraged to participate in the Adult Hepatitis B Immunization Initiative. If you or your agency is interested in participating in the Initiative, please contact:

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The full MMWR *A Comprehensive Immunization Strategy to Eliminate Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States* can be accessed on the web at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5516a1.htm>.

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New HBV resource for persons living with HIV

The Treatment Action Group (TAG), a private nonprofit research and policy think tank committed to improving HIV prevention and care efforts, recently released *The Guide to Hepatitis B for People Living with HIV*. This resource provides information on the prevention, care, and treatment of HBV, and the impact of HBV on HIV disease. It is designed to be accessible to people with no medical training. Where medical terms are used, they are explained in detailed but simple language. English and Spanish versions of the Guide are available on-line, at:

<http://treatmentactiongroup.org/publication.aspx?id=3174>

Hard copies of the Spanish and English versions are available at no charge and can be ordered online at: <http://treatmentactiongroup.org/form.aspx?ekfrm=94>

Looking for hepatitis C information and resources?

For information on hepatitis C and the Wisconsin Hepatitis C Program, including recent surveillance information and related consumer and provider resources, visit the Wisconsin Hepatitis C Program website at:

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/hepatitis/>.