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# News Release

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## VA Expands Hepatitis C Drug Treatment

*Expanded funding now allows VA to provide increased drug therapy at VA facilities nationwide*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it is now able to fund care for all Veterans with hepatitis C for Fiscal Year 2016 regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease. The move follows increased funding from Congress along with reduced drug prices.

"We're honored to be able to expand treatment for Veterans who are afflicted with hepatitis C," says VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "To manage limited resources previously, we established treatment priority for the sickest patients. Additionally, if Veterans are currently waiting on an appointment for community care through the Choice Program, they can now turn to their local VA facility for this treatment or can elect to continue to receive treatment through the Choice Program."

VA has long led the country in screening for and treating hepatitis C. VA has treated over 76,000 Veterans infected with hepatitis C and approximately 60,000 have been cured. In addition, since the beginning of 2014, more than 42,000 patients have been treated with the new highly effective antivirals. In fiscal year 2015, VA allocated \$696 million for new hepatitis C drugs (17 percent of the VA's total pharmacy budget) and in fiscal year 2016, VA anticipates spending approximately \$1 billion on hepatitis C drugs. VA expects that with the expansion, many more Veterans will be started on hepatitis C treatment every week this fiscal year.

In addition to furnishing clinical care to Veterans with hepatitis C, VA Research continues to expand the knowledge base regarding the disease through scientific studies focused on effective care, screening, and healthcare delivery including to female Veterans and Veterans with complicated medical conditions in addition to hepatitis C.

For additional information on Hepatitis C treatments Veterans can log onto <http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/hcv/index.asp>.

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