Hepatitis C Elimination in Europe

Our vision for a Hepatitis C-free Europe

We, the signatories of this declaration, gathered in Brussels on the occasion of the first European Union HCV Policy Summit on 27 February 2016, are committed to the elimination of hepatitis C in Europe.

1. Hepatitis C is a life-threatening disease. It affects millions of people in Europe and has terrible public and personal impacts. It is now possible to eradicate hepatitis C in Europe.

2. Today, scientific and technological breakthroughs give us the unique opportunity to eliminate hepatitis C in Europe by 2030 in terms of deaths and societal and economic costs.

3. The specific challenges of hepatitis C require holistic, people-centred, health system-wide, integrated care, with all stakeholders combining their efforts with a unified and sustained response.

We share the vision that eliminating hepatitis C in Europe by 2030 will require us to:

1. Make hepatitis C and its elimination in Europe an explicit and adequately resourced public health priority. To be pursued using appropriate means at all levels and through collaboration between individual citizens, civil society organisations, researchers, the private sector, local authorities, European Union institutions, WHO, the World Health Organization, and all hepatitis C stakeholders.

2. Develop, implement and monitor effective hepatitis C elimination strategies. Prioritise and allocate adequate resources for the implementation of hepatitis C elimination strategies.

3. Make the development of integrated care pathways a core component of hepatitis C elimination strategies, taking into account the specific health system barriers and other challenges related to the management of hepatitis C infection.

4. Pay particular attention to the link between hepatitis C and social marginalisation, and for all hepatitis C elimination-related activities to be consistent with fundamental human rights principles, including non-discrimination, equality, participation and the right to health.

5. Strengthen efforts to harmonise and improve surveillance of hepatitis C across the European Union, in order to evaluate hepatitis C elimination strategies.

6. Introduce a European Hepatitis Awareness Week, the World-day of World Hepatitis. Deployed in a coordinated awareness-raising and educational activities across Europe.

7. Review progress on achieving the objectives and goals set out in this manifesto and regular quarterly meetings and other relevant opportunities.

Tools for Change

Online learning for offline action

World Hepatitis Day 2016 Theme Announced

Executive Board Set Vision for 2016-2017

From Tokyo to Brussels Elimination Holds Centre Stage
Elimination is the buzz-word of the month. High-level policy meetings took place in Brussels, Tokyo and Croatia, all focusing on the concept of elimination. Members of our Executive Board travelled to London to spend two days discussing the newly launched 2016 – 2017 Strategic Plan and how this year’s activities can help drive action towards elimination. We also held our first patient advocacy webinar, where 80 people from 50 countries tuned in to hear from expert panellists on how they can use policy documents to effect change, with a particular focus on the upcoming WHO Elimination Strategy for Viral Hepatitis.

We feel hepatitis is finally starting to get the attention it deserves and in order to keep up the momentum we are very excited to announce the theme of World Hepatitis Day 2016: ELIMINATION.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine,

Raquel Peck
Chief Executive Officer
On 16 February, George Kalamitsis, WHA Executive Board Member for the European Region and Charles Gore, WHA President took part in the first EU HCV Policy Summit to discuss the viability of hepatitis C elimination and to launch the first Hepatitis C European Elimination Manifesto.

The HCV Elimination Manifesto outlined the steps needed to eliminate hepatitis C in Europe by 2030 and ensure commitment from EU and national policy makers. Specifically, signatories of the Manifesto pledge to:

- Make hepatitis C and its elimination in Europe an explicit public health priority to be pursued at all levels
- Ensure that patients, civil society groups and other relevant stakeholders are directly involved in developing and implementing hepatitis C elimination strategies
- Pay particular attention to the links between hepatitis C and social marginalisation
- Introduce a European Hepatitis Awareness Week during the week of World Hepatitis Day (28 July)

Read and endorse the full manifesto [here](#).
Where in the world...

Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL) Conference
Tokyo, Japan

Meeting an unmet need: the road from Alice Springs to Brazil

During the APASL conference (20-24 February) WHA, together with partners, delivered the 2016 World Indigenous People’s Conference Workshop on Viral Hepatitis, where panellists called for better data on the prevalence and mortality in Indigenous peoples in Asia, more engagement with these communities and more specific WHO recognition of their plight. This meeting is a prelude to the upcoming World Indigenous People’s Conference scheduled to take place in late 2017 in Manaus in the Brazilian Amazon.

More info here.

Viral Hepatitis and the Sustainable Development Goals: driving action towards elimination

We were also involved in a policy symposium organised by the Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific (CEVHAP), on how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can drive change towards elimination. The meeting called for Member States within the Asia region to support the elimination targets and adopt WHO’s Global Health Sector Strategy at the World Health Assembly in May.

More info here.
Hepatitis C: Beginning of the End

Are we ready to think about the elimination of HCV in the Republic of Croatia?

Zagreb, Croatia

On 19 February, Raquel Peck, CEO of the WHA, chaired a discussion on hepatitis C elimination in the Republic of Croatia and how it can be achieved. A number of high-profile national policymakers, WHO EURO representatives, civil society groups and media were in attendance to discuss its feasibility. The main take away was that elimination is feasible but would require a scale up in interventions and investment which would be recovered by 2021. However this can only be achieved with strong political commitment.

If you would like more information, please contact Tatjana Reić, ELPA President at tatjana@hepatos.hr.

WHA Member Updates from Around the World

Argentina

The tireless advocacy efforts of WHA member HCV Sin Fronteras have succeeded in achieving access to new hepatitis C treatments in Argentina. HCV Sin Fronteras attended a meeting on 11 February with the Vice Minister of Health Dr. Nestor Perez Balino, which resulted in commitment from the Government of Argentina to provide hepatitis C drugs to 1157 patients most in need.

India

WHA member Liver Foundation, West Bengal organised a Regional Hepatitis Summit on 28 February in Kolkata, India. The meeting was convened to discuss the global hepatitis movement and featured a key note address from Charles Gore. Speakers came from across the region and featured a number of WHA members.

We love to highlight the great work of our members, so get in touch with updates on your national activities.
On 11 – 12 February, the WHA Executive Board met in London for the annual board meeting to discuss key elements of how the organisation functions, from reviewing internal processes, to advising on WHA’s strategic goals.

Following the meeting, we are delighted to launch the WHA Strategic Plan 2016-2017, outlining our key goals and activities for the next two years. Representatives from WHO were also present at the meeting and were supportive of our vision.

World Hepatitis Day 2016 Theme Launched

This year the World Hepatitis Day (WHD) theme will be...

elimination

Members can use the theme of elimination to profile their national priorities. For example, greater awareness is needed to reach elimination, tackling stigma is needed to reach elimination or cheaper diagnostics are needed to reach elimination, etc.

We are also very excited to announce that on WHD, the Global Elimination Movement will be launched across the world, calling for the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.

We urge members and campaign supporters to mark WHD 2016 and celebrate the movement in their countries. A full set of campaign materials, resources and materials will be made available in April.
On 16 February, 80 people from 50 countries across the world attended a webinar to learn how organisations can use global policy commitments as a lever for national change. Panellists from the World Health Organization, United States Center for Disease Control, World Hepatitis Alliance, and University of Copenhagen and one of our members in Nigeria discussed various ways this can be achieved. If you missed this dynamic discussion, you can watch the webinar recording here:

The webinar will also provide an introduction to the HCV Quest Toolkit and Resource Hub, which will include documents and resources designed to support the development, roll-out and utilisation of survey findings for advocacy activities.

The resources include:

**User guide:** highlights key aspects of the HCV Quest data and shows how it can be used with different stakeholders. The guide includes key messages, tips on how to engage media and how to carry out surveys.

**Advocacy Tools:** support the utilisation of HCV Quest findings and include fact sheets, a template letter to policy makers, standby Q&As and an external presentation.

**Communications Tools:** assist with media outreach and include a template press release, example Twitter and Facebook posts, social media graphics and an infographic.

Access the HCV Quest Resources Hub here

The Tools for Change webinar is the perfect opportunity to ask any questions regarding the resources so register here.