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## May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month

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### Raising hepatitis awareness

This month marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hepatitis Awareness Month. The goal of this annual observance is to raise awareness of hepatitis and encourage families to protect themselves from hepatitis.

The World Health Alliance, in partnership with the World Health Organization, has also designated May 19<sup>th</sup> as World Hepatitis Day. The campaign theme, “*This is hepatitis... Real Lives Real Stories,*” aims to tell the human story of viral hepatitis and continue the battle of raising awareness of hepatitis B and C around the world. For first-hand accounts from individuals who are living with hepatitis, go to:

<http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org>.

Resources are available online:

- [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis) (under Resource Center)
- [www.cdc.gov/Features/ViralHepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ViralHepatitis)
- [www.immunize.org/hepawareness/hepaware\\_mat.asp](http://www.immunize.org/hepawareness/hepaware_mat.asp)

### Michigan receives national award

Michigan received an award for high immunization coverage levels at the CDC National Immunization Conference, held in April. Results from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2008 National Immunization Survey (NIS) were used to determine eligibility for this award.

The NIS ranked Michigan 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for hepatitis B birth dose coverage levels. The national average is 58.4% ± 1.2 and Michigan is at 79.8% ± 5.8.

The 2008 NIS also shows Michigan as:

- 1st in DTaP #4
- 2nd in 4:3:1:0:3:1 (no Hib, no PCV)
- 2nd in 4:3:1:0:3:1:4 (no Hib)

Michigan received this award thanks to your commitment and hard work in reaching this high level of protection for our children. This is your award. Please know that we deeply appreciate the service and commitment you make to protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

### Websites for hepatitis resources

A [comprehensive list of hepatitis websites and resources](#) is posted on the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) website. Check it out today!

### Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program (PHBPP)

The Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program’s goal is to prevent hepatitis B transmission from pregnant women to their infants and household and sexual contacts. The program relies on the coordinated transfer of information between laboratories, primary care providers, hospitals and local health departments (LHDs). CDC estimates that only about half of Michigan’s births to HBsAg-positive women are being identified. Case investigation data show that many women who are chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus are either not being tested for subsequent pregnancies and/or their repeat HBsAg-positive results are not being reported to the LHD.

Physicians need to test all pregnant women for hepatitis B ([Michigan Public Health Code, section 333.5123](#)). Both the physician and laboratory are required to report all HBsAg-positive results in pregnant women within 24 hours to the LHD ([Michigan Communicable Disease Rules, Section 333.5111](#)). It is essential that all HBsAg-positive results, even if it is a repeat test, are reported to the LHD.

HBsAg-positive results should be reported directly to the LHD by fax, telephone or through the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS). If you need additional information regarding the procedures for reporting HBsAg-positive results in your county, please contact your LHD. For additional information or to view the PHBPP updated program manual, go to [www.michigan.gov/hepatitisb](http://www.michigan.gov/hepatitisb).

The importance of identifying HBsAg-positive pregnant women cannot be overstated. The health of their newborns is dependent on protection from hepatitis B.

### Hepatitis B birth dose information

Hepatitis B vaccine has been available to all babies in Michigan since 1991. By enrolling in the Universal Hepatitis B Vaccination Program for Newborns, all birthing hospitals can receive FREE hepatitis B vaccine for all of their newborns. Contact your [local health department](#) or the MDCH Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program (PHBPP) at 517-335-9443 or 800-964-4487.

## Hepatitis basics

[Viral hepatitis](#) is caused by a virus that infects the liver. Hepatitis A, B and C are the most common.

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) is spread by close contact with a person who has HAV or by eating food or drinking water that has HAV in it.

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is spread by coming in contact with the blood or body fluid of an HBV infected person. In Michigan, hepatitis B vaccine is available for all infants, adolescents and adults at risk for HBV infection. Approximately 800,000 - 1.4 million Americans have chronic HBV infection and approximately 3,000 people die every year due to complications of HBV disease.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is spread by coming in contact with the blood of an HCV infected person. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. Approximately 2.7 - 3.9 million Americans have chronic HCV infection and approximately 12,000 people die every year due to the complications of HCV disease.

## Hepatitis prevention

There is a safe and effective vaccine to prevent both hepatitis A and B. Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for children 12 months of age and older and for adults who are at risk of getting HAV. Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for infants starting at birth, everyone 18 years of age and younger, and adults who are at risk of getting HBV.

Contact your local health department for information on eligibility and availability of vaccine for [children](#) and [adults](#).

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. Individuals can best prevent this disease by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, such as sharing needles or injection drug equipment.

It is estimated that approximately 2 million U.S. residents may be infected with chronic HBV and 5 million with chronic HCV. Many more remain unidentified and therefore untreated. National surveys do not assess high-prevalence subgroups, such as certain minority groups, the institutionalized, homeless, and incarcerated individuals. Each year, hundreds of people in Michigan become ill from viral hepatitis. Prevention, vaccination and testing are the best ways to protect people against hepatitis disease. For more information call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Websites for more information:

- [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)
- [www.michigan.gov/cdinfo](http://www.michigan.gov/cdinfo)
- [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize)
- [www.hbvadvocate.org](http://www.hbvadvocate.org)
- [www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org)

## Subscribe to the MMWR

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) is a weekly CDC publication containing information on a wide variety of public health topics including vaccine preventable diseases.

Keep up with the latest information and have CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report emailed to you every Friday free of charge. We urge you to [subscribe to this excellent resource today](#).

## Hometown Health Heroes honored for their service

MDCH – in conjunction with its partners in local public health across the state – celebrated Michigan Public Health Week April 11-17. MDCH highlighted the week with its annual Hometown Health Heroes celebration. [Details about the event are posted on the Department's website](#).

Among many other deserving recipients, MDCH awarded Roderic Tinney, M.D. with a Hometown Health Hero award. Dr. Tinney serves Charlevoix County as the county's sole pediatrician and is a critical partner with the LHD. He advocates for vaccinations in the community, and under his leadership, has increased the hepatitis B birth dose rates from 54% to 94% in three years.

We want to thank Dr. Tinney for his dedication and commitment in protecting Michigan residents from vaccine preventable diseases. We also want to thank the staff of Dr. Tinney's office, the Charlevoix County office of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, Charlevoix Area Hospital and all those who helped to increase Charlevoix's birth dose coverage levels.

## April issues of Needle Tips and Vaccinate Adults posted online

The Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) has just released its [April 2010 issue of Needle Tips](#) for all healthcare professionals who give vaccines. Also available is [Vaccinate Adults](#), a version of Needle Tips modified for those who work only with adult patients. Both are now available for online reading and/or printing.

These publications contain ready-to-print educational materials for healthcare professionals and their patients, updated immunization schedules, vaccine news highlights, and IAC's popular "Ask the Experts" question-and-answer column with answers by CDC experts William Atkinson, MD, MPH, and Andrew Kroger, MD, MPH.

IAC is now in its second year of publishing these periodicals exclusively online. Current and past issues of Needle Tips are available at [www.immunize.org/nt](http://www.immunize.org/nt) and Vaccinate Adults at [www.immunize.org/va](http://www.immunize.org/va). To receive direct notification when new issues are published, subscribe at [www.immunize.org/subscribe](http://www.immunize.org/subscribe). On this page, you can also subscribe to IAC's free weekly email news service, IAC Express, which keeps you up-to-date on immunization news between issues of IAC's periodicals.

## Michigan Immunization Timely Tips (MITT)

The Michigan Immunization Timely Tips is dedicated to sharing information with all those who are interested and have a need to be kept up-to-date on immunization topics. MITT is posted at [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize), under the Provider Information section.

If you have any suggestions or comments about this publication, please feel free to share them with Rosemary Franklin at [franklinr@michigan.gov](mailto:franklinr@michigan.gov).

## 2010 AIM Provider Tool Kit is online

This online tool kit contains up-to-date tools for immunization practice for your office. We are constantly updating this website. Check it out today at: [www.aimtoolkit.org](http://www.aimtoolkit.org).