Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is transmitted through contact with the blood or body fluids on an infected person. In the U.S., 800,000-1.4 million persons are estimated to have HBV. Effective vaccinations for HBV are available, and the CDC recommends vaccination of all infants at birth to protect against the virus.

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is also transmitted primarily through contact with infected blood. There is an estimated 3.2 million chronically infected persons in the U.S. No vaccine for HCV is available.

Cirrhosis or Liver Cancer can result from chronic infection with both Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C. Without treatment, these chronic infections can also result in death.

Overall, there were more hospitalizations attributed to Hepatitis C than Hepatitis B or HIV. Hospitalizations attributed to HCV increased by nearly 40% from 2005-2014. Total hospitalizations attributed to both HBV and HIV decreased slightly during this same time period.

Hepatitis B and C infections increase the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), which may result in the need for liver transplantation. Since the 1990s, the number of liver transplantations and the number of persons on the waitlist for a liver transplant have grown markedly.
While not all liver cancers are a direct result of chronic infection with HBV or HCV, viral hepatitis is often a contributor. Data from the National Cancer Institute estimated that around 75% of all liver cancers include either HBV or HCV. In Michigan, the incidence of liver and intrahepatic bile duct cancer has increased 33% between 2004 and 2013. This is thought to primarily be the result of chronic and untreated HBV and HCV.

Liver cancer is associated with very poor prognoses, with a five year survival rate of less than 20%.

The total number of deaths per year due to liver and intrahepatic bile duct cancer has risen 39% from 2004 to 2014. As rates of liver cancer have increased, there has been a subsequent increase in liver cancer mortality. Many of these cases could be avoided with improved efforts to test and treat viral hepatitis infections.

Between 2005 and 2014, deaths due to Hepatitis C increased by 62%. During this same time frame, HBV deaths decreased from 18 to 12, while HIV related deaths decreased by about 25%. The decrease in HCV-related deaths from 2013-2014 may be due to the introduction of new HCV medications during this time.