

Health Disparities in the Medicare Population: Hepatitis (Chronic Viral B & C)

Hepatitis is a disease caused by one of five known viruses: A, B, C, D, and E that results in inflammation of the liver, and can be acute, chronic, or unspecified. Both hepatitis B and C are chronic, persistent or otherwise long-lasting in their effects, and can progress to fibrosis, cirrhosis, or liver cancer. There is no cure available for hepatitis B or C, but regular monitoring for the progression of liver disease is necessary.

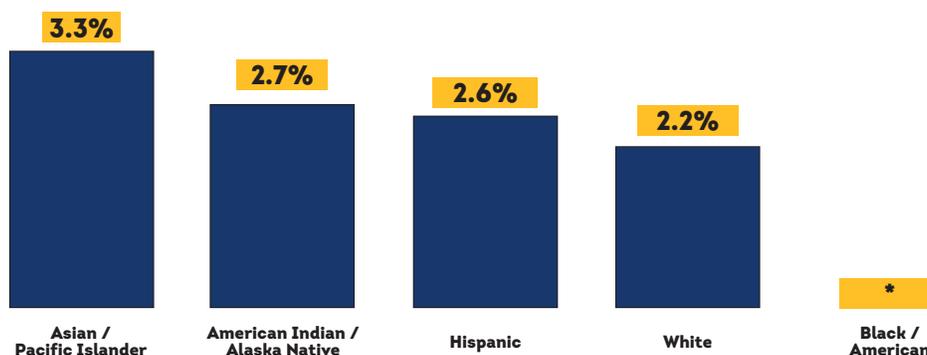
A vaccine is recommended for anyone seeking long term protection from hepatitis B. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1.2 million people are living with hepatitis B and 3.2 million living with hepatitis C in the United States.¹ In 2014, Hepatitis B was highest among Blacks with 0.9 cases per 100,000.² American Indian/ Alaska Natives had the highest incidence of Hepatitis C in 2014 with 1.3 cases per 100,000.³ Asian/Pacific Islanders make up less than 5% of the population, but account for 50% of Americans living with hepatitis B.⁴



In 2014, 0.7% of all Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) beneficiaries and 2.4% of those less than 65 years of age had claims with a diagnosis of hepatitis B or C.⁵ Within the less than 65 years of age population, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are higher among males (2.8%) than among females (1.9%). The figure below shows the prevalence of hepatitis B or C among beneficiaries less than 65 years of age. Asian/ Pacific Islanders (3.3%) had the highest prevalence of hepatitis compared to American Indian (2.7%), Hispanic (2.6%) and White (2.2%).

Medicare & You: Hepatitis Awareness (video) describes coverage including **Hepatitis B vaccinations** and **Hepatitis C screening tests** for those at risk.

Prevalence of Hepatitis (Chronic Viral B & C) among Medicare Beneficiaries less than 65 Years by Race/ Ethnicity, 2014



Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Condition Data Warehouse (CCW)

Note: Population is limited to Medicare Fee-For-Service beneficiaries. RTI Race Code used for analysis. Racial categories of White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander are classified as non-Hispanic. Hispanic ethnicity includes all race categories. "*" indicates that the data have been suppressed because there are fewer than 11 Medicare beneficiaries in the cell.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2014surveillance/commentary.htm#hepatitisC>

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2014surveillance/commentary.htm#hepatitisC>

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/populations/api.htm>

5 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Conditions. <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Chronic-Conditions/index.html>