

HEALTH & SAFETY CODE

CHAPTER 94. STATE PLAN FOR HEPATITIS C; EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

Sec. 94.001. STATE PLAN FOR HEPATITIS C. (a) The department shall develop a state plan for prevention and treatment of hepatitis C. The plan must include strategies for prevention and treatment of hepatitis C in specific demographic groups that are disproportionately affected by hepatitis C, including persons infected with HIV, veterans, racial or ethnic minorities that suffer a higher incidence of hepatitis C, and persons who engage in high risk behavior, such as intravenous drug use.

(b) In developing the plan, the department shall seek the input of:

(1) the public, including members of the public that have hepatitis C;

(2) each state agency that provides services to persons with hepatitis C or the functions of which otherwise involve hepatitis C, including any appropriate health and human services agency described by Section 531.001, Government Code;

(3) any advisory body that addresses issues related to hepatitis C;

(4) public advocates concerned with issues related to hepatitis C; and

(5) providers of services to persons with hepatitis C.

(c) The department shall update the state plan developed under this section biennially and shall, not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year, file the state plan with the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 918, Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2001.

Sec. 94.002. HEPATITIS C EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM. (a) The department shall develop a program to heighten awareness and enhance knowledge and understanding of hepatitis C. The department shall:

(1) conduct a seroprevalence study to estimate the current and future impact of hepatitis C on the state;

(2) conduct health education, public awareness, and community outreach activities to promote public awareness and knowledge about the risk factors, the value of early detection, available screening services, and the options available for the treatment of hepatitis C;

(3) provide training to public health clinic staff regarding the treatment, detection, and methods of transmission of hepatitis C;

(4) identify to health care providers and employers the benefits of disease awareness and prevention; and

(5) develop a prevention program to reduce the risk of transmission of hepatitis C.

(b) In developing the prevention program required by Subsection (a)(5), the department may forecast the economic and clinical impacts of hepatitis C and the impact of hepatitis C on quality of life. The department may develop the forecasts in conjunction with an academic medical center or a nonprofit institution with experience using disease management prospective modeling and simulation techniques.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Health and Safety Code Sec. 93.001 and amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 918, Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2001.

Sec. 94.003. DEPARTMENT VOLUNTARY TESTING PROGRAMS. (a) The department shall establish voluntary hepatitis C testing programs to be performed at facilities providing voluntary HIV testing under Section 85.082 in each public health region to make confidential counseling and testing available.

(b) The department may contract with public and private entities to perform the testing as necessary according to local circumstances.

(c) The results of a test conducted by a testing program or department program under this section may not be used for insurance purposes, to screen or determine suitability for employment, or to discharge a person from employment.

(d) A person who intentionally violates Subsection (c) is liable to a person injured by the violation. The injured person may bring a civil action for damages and may recover for each violation from a person who violates Subsection (c):

(1) the greater of \$1,000 or actual damages; and

(2) reasonable attorney's fees.

(e) In addition to the remedies provided by Subsection (d), the person may bring an action to restrain a violation or threatened violation of Subsection (c).

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Health and Safety Code Sec. 93.002 by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 918, Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2001.

Sec. 94.004. TRAINING OF COUNSELORS. (a) The department shall develop and offer a training course for persons providing hepatitis C counseling. The training course must include information relating to the special needs of persons with positive hepatitis C test results, including the importance of early intervention and treatment and recognition of psychosocial needs.

(b) The department shall maintain a registry of persons who successfully complete the training course.

(c) The department may charge a fee for the course to persons other than employees of entities receiving state or federal funds for hepatitis C counseling and testing programs through a contract with the department. The board shall set the fee in an amount necessary to cover the costs of providing the course.

(d) The department may contract for the training of counselors.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999. Renumbered from V.T.C.A., Health and Safety Code Sec. 93.003 by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 918, Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2001.