

# Hepatitis C Testing Law

## What is the New York State Hepatitis C Testing Law?

The NYS Hepatitis C Testing Law requires a hepatitis C screening test must be offered to every individual born between 1945 and 1965. If an individual accepts the offer and the hepatitis C screening test is reactive, the health care provider must offer the individual follow-up health care or refer the individual to a health care provider who can provide follow-up health care. The follow-up health care must include a hepatitis C diagnostic test (HCV RNA).

## When did the law go into effect?

The law went into effect on January 1, 2014.

## Which clinicians must offer hepatitis C testing under this law?

Providers who must offer hepatitis C testing include physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners providing primary care regardless of setting and without regard to board certification.

## The medical settings where providers are required to offer a hepatitis C screening test are:

- Hospital (inpatient)
- Hospital out patient clinics
- Other health care settings where primary care services are being offered.

Emergency Departments are not required by the law to offer hepatitis C screening testing, but are encouraged to do so.

## Why should baby boomers get tested for hepatitis C?

While anyone can get hepatitis C, more than 75% of adults infected are baby boomers, people born from 1945 through 1965.

- Baby boomers are five times more likely to have hepatitis C.
- Liver disease, liver cancer, and deaths from hepatitis C are on the rise.
- The longer people live with hepatitis C, the more likely they are to develop serious, life-threatening liver disease.
- Getting tested can help people learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment.
- Treatments are available that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

## Why do baby boomers have such high rates of hepatitis C?

The reason that baby boomers have high rates of hepatitis C is not completely understood. However, it is believed that most baby boomers became infected in the 1970s and 1980s when rates of hepatitis C and drug use were highest. Many baby boomers could have gotten infected from contaminated blood and blood products before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992 and universal precautions were adopted. Others may have become infected from injecting drugs, even if only once in the past.

## Are there other populations that providers should routinely be screening for hepatitis C?

Other individuals that should be tested for hepatitis C include:

- Anyone who has injected drugs, even just once or many years ago
- Anyone with certain medical conditions, such as chronic liver disease and HIV or AIDS
- Anyone who has received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Anyone with abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Health and safety workers who have been exposed to blood on the job through a needlestick or injury with a sharp object
- Anyone on hemodialysis
- Anyone born to a mother with hepatitis C

## Is the hepatitis C screening test covered by Medicaid, Medicare or other insurances?

- Medicaid and Medicare currently cover hepatitis C screening for persons at risk, including baby boomers.
- Persons with private insurance should refer to their policy or contact their carrier to see if the test is covered.

## What is the proper sequence of testing for hepatitis C?

The proper hepatitis C testing sequence is a hepatitis C antibody test, followed by a diagnostic nucleic acid test (NAT) intended for the detection of HCV RNA, if the initial antibody test is reactive.

## What are the proper billing codes for hepatitis C testing?

Test Type	CPT Code
Hepatitis C antibody test	86803
HCV RNA Qualitative	87521
HCV RNA Quantitative	87522

## Where can providers find out more about information about the NYS Hepatitis C Testing Law and hepatitis C care and treatment?

Providers can find more information about the NYS Hepatitis C Testing Law and hepatitis C care and treatment by going to:

[www.health.ny.gov/hepatitisc](http://www.health.ny.gov/hepatitisc).