



Hepatitis Update

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Hepatitis Update is brought to you by the Division of Disease Control and Health Protection, Bureau of Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Section at the Florida Department of Health.

If you have a news item or photo you would like to submit, email the editor at:

April.Crowley@flhealth.gov

Public Health is 125 Years Old

DOH Communications Office

In February, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) recognized 125 years of public health in Florida. The state Legislature created the State Board of Health on February 20, 1889, in response to yellow fever epidemics in Jacksonville and other port cities. Dr. Joseph Yates Porter from Key West became Florida's first State Health Officer. Yellow fever in Florida was eradicated in 1905.

"Florida's dramatic growth was made possible through public health efforts that controlled disease and improved environmental health," said Dr. John Armstrong, State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health. "Just as Dr. Porter and colleagues saved Floridians from yellow fever over a century ago, we are committed to solving the top public health threat to Florida families now: weight challenge."

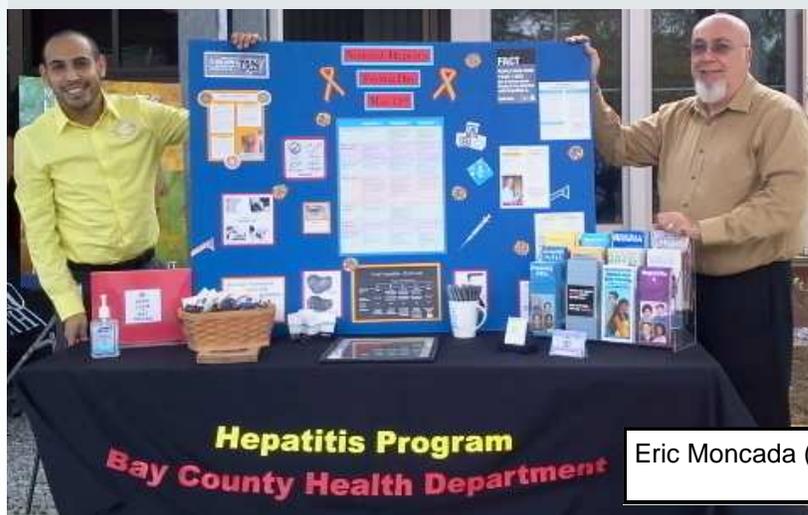
The year-long celebration of 125 years of Florida Public Health was launched in Key West on February 3, where Dr. Armstrong joined Dr. Porter's great-great granddaughter in a ceremonial wreath laying at Dr. Porter's grave site.

DOH in Bay County Observes 75 Years

By Eric Moncada, Health Educator

The Florida Department of Health in Bay County recently celebrated 75 years of public health service. I had the honor of managing booths for the HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Programs and truly enjoyed every minute of it with pride. As a team, we educated, assessed and tested members of our community as well as provided

useful information about health and wellness. I believe the outcome of the event was extraordinary, and it was a great opportunity to give back to our community.



Eric Moncada (left) and Rick Vitale

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Florida Hepatitis Prevention Program YEAR IN PICTURES - 2013



Feb 11: Hepatitis C Testing Consultation at CDC in Atlanta



May 10: Cindy Kruty joins Tallahassee staff



May 30-31: Viral Hepatitis Council Meeting in Tampa



World Hepatitis Day in Tallahassee



July & August: Technical Assistance & Training Site Visits to Collier, Lee & Pinellas



Naples Beach



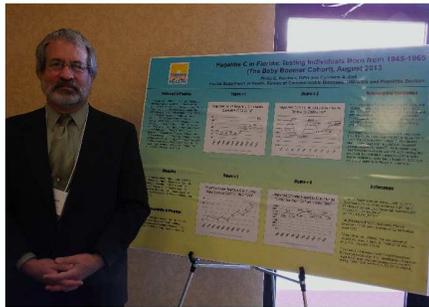
Ft. Myers Marina at Sunset



The Caloosahatchee River



From Downtown St. Pete



Aug 28-30: Fla Public Health Assn Mtg



Oct 23-25: National Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator Mtg, Washington, DC



Dec 5-6: Florida Hepatitis Coordinator Meeting in Clearwater



Clearwater Beach Sunset



The Tallahassee Staff in 2013, Front: Jessi, Cindy & April; Rear: Donna, Phil & Dena

Division of Disease Control and Health Protection

Real Health Issues: Real Health Solutions

New Hepatitis Council Members

By April Crowley

The Florida Viral Hepatitis Council (VHC) recently welcomed four new members: Brian Anderson, Gordon Licata, Karen Muller and John-Mark Schacht.

For eight years, **Brian Anderson** was the Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Health. He has extensive experience in the field of viral hepatitis programmatic development, prevention, vaccination, education and research. He also has widespread skills in collaborating with local, county, state and federal entities which enables him to better serve those living with viral hepatitis. Mr. Anderson currently works for The AIDS Institute in Tampa.



Brian Anderson



Gordon Licata

Gordon Licata is a Hepatitis C Support Project (HCSP) certified HCV Educator from St. Petersburg. He was the director of the Chance Center for eight years and is currently the director of the non-profit organization HepatitisMain. Mr. Licata works closely with individuals infected with viral hepatitis in his community and is the facilitator of the Tampa Bay Hepatitis and Liver Disease Support Group.



Karen Muller

Karen Muller is a nurse practitioner at Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Pinellas County. Since 1996, she has held various positions at the center including Ryan White Coordinator and Hepatitis C Coordinator. From 2005 – 2007, she worked in the Hepatology Division of Roche Labs, Inc. Ms. Muller has vast experience as an educator and in the treatment of hepatitis C.



Pat Simmons

Special thanks to **Pat Simmons**, who is leaving the council. Ms. Simmons is a Counseling & Testing Field Representative in the HIV/ AIDS and Hepatitis Section in the Bureau of Communicable Diseases at the Florida Department of Health. One of her many duties includes OraQuick rapid HIV test trainings. Ms. Simmons served on the council for six years and has been a huge proponent of integrating hepatitis services into HIV testing.



John-Mark Schacht

Replacing Ms. Simmons is **John-Mark Schacht**, who currently serves as the research study coordinator for the Florida Department of Health’s National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) System conducted in Miami-Dade County. Additionally, he assists with prevention initiatives and closely monitors emerging prevention-related research. Mr. Schacht has worked for the past 18 years in a variety of human services and rehabilitative capacities, including programming for the developmentally disabled, welfare transition/workforce development and HIV/AIDS care and prevention.

The VHC was established in 2004 to encourage and promote the combined efforts of dedicated, skilled individuals and organizations to reduce the growing burden of viral hepatitis on Floridians, their families and communities. The VHC provides advice and guidance to the Florida Hepatitis Prevention Program on issues related to viral hepatitis, and writes and updates goals and objectives related to the prevention of viral hepatitis in our state.

The 15-member council includes representation from the community, private health care, public health, corrections, academic institutions, drug treatment centers and other areas.



Nosipho Beaufort

CDC Hepatitis Meeting

By Phil Reichert

Cindy Kruty and I attended a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) meeting in Atlanta on March 6 and 7 for recipients of the adult hepatitis B vaccine grant funding, a group that includes Florida. Cindy presented to the grantees and CDC project officers on the data collected from the six county health departments that participate in this initiative. Her presentation was well-received and prompted several questions and some discussion about Florida's successes providing adult hepatitis B vaccination to populations at risk.



Phil Reichert

Our CDC project officer for the Florida Vaccine Grant is **Nosipho Beaufort**. Nosipho was the field services coordinator for the Hepatitis Prevention Program (HPP) from 2007—2010 before moving to Atlanta to work for the CDC. She started with the HPP in 2005 as the office manager.

Hepatitis C Palm Cards

By April Crowley

Due to the favorable response to our hepatitis B palm cards (sometimes called “pocket” cards), we now have one for hepatitis C. Palm cards are a great way to convey a message in a powerful, economical manner. These particular cards are printed on two sides and can easily fit in a wallet, someone’s pocket, backpack or purse. Because palm cards are small, they’re easy to store. They’re also effortless to transport when you’re doing outreach. These palm cards are tri-folds (consisting of three parts) which makes them even more convenient.

The back panel offers a space where county health departments can add local contact information. The inside panels provide facts about hepatitis C, e.g., how it’s transmitted and what people need to know if they are infected. Below is a sample of the new palm card (slightly smaller than actual size). If you would like to order some, contact Jessi.Embleton@flhealth.gov or call her at 850-245-4139.

If You Have Hepatitis C...

- Avoid sharing needles for injecting drugs, tattooing, piercing or any other reason
- Do not share razors, toothbrushes or nail clippers
- Avoid alcohol
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and hepatitis B
- Join a support group
- Get regular health checkups
- Use a latex condom when having sex
- Discuss treatment options with your health care provider





www.flahepatitis.org

What You Need To Know About The Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)



What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). It is spread through contact with infected blood. Many people with HCV will carry the virus for a lifetime. It can cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver cancer and death. Symptoms may include:

- Yellow skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Feeling very tired
- Stomach pain
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite

Who Should Be Tested For HCV?

- All Baby Boomers born from 1945–1965
- Anyone who had a blood transfusion before 1992
- People who inject drugs, even once many years ago
- Persons with hepatitis B or HIV/AIDS
- Persons who were ever on long-term hemodialysis

How Do You Get HCV?

- Sharing injection drug equipment, even once many years ago
- Receiving blood transfusion before 1992
- Occupational needle-stick
- Long term hemodialysis
- Infected mother to her infant
- Sexual transmission (not common, however, some sexual practices may involve blood)



www.flahepatitis.org
www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/



Hepatitis Support Group Manual

By Alan Franciscus



Alan Franciscus

For many people, living with hepatitis C is not easy. On a daily basis, we are all faced with making many important personal decisions that can affect almost every area of our lives. The best way to live well with hepatitis C is to educate ourselves about hepatitis C so that we can receive the optimal medical care. It is also very important that we seek and receive support from healthcare providers, family, loved ones, friends, and peers. One important component of the process is to discuss and share our experiences about hepatitis C with others. A peer support group is one of the best places to learn about hepatitis C and find support.

I found out I had hepatitis C in 1996. At that time, there was very little information or support for people with hepatitis C. The information that was available then was hard to find, and much of it was just plain wrong. Shortly after I found out I had hepatitis C, I asked my healthcare provider to recommend a support group in San Francisco. To my surprise, he told me that there were no support groups in San Francisco for people with hepatitis C!

In 1997, I started a support group. It wasn't really difficult to set up and maintain, but a lot of what I needed to know I gained from taking a workshop and by "hit or miss." It would have been much easier for me if I had had some sort of material and advice that was geared towards starting and running a support group specifically for people with hepatitis C. The need for this type of information became clear when people from all over the country started contacting me for advice about starting a support group in their community

I began to gather information pulled from my own experience, along with advice from others that I had collected, into a document. The result of my years of trial and error and, more importantly, the advice from others, is what is included in the original manual. In 2010, I added and greatly expanded the support group handbook. In 2014, I updated it to include the latest information about hepatitis C and the result is this handbook.

I hope that the handbook will give you the necessary tools for starting a support group. Support group leaders don't necessarily need a lot of knowledge or skills to run a group. The most important qualities of a support group leader are dedication, putting the members' needs first, and being a person who cares about others. The people who run a support group are a special kind of person who can touch the lives of so many others affected by hepatitis C.

To download a copy of the handbook (it's free) visit our website at: <http://www.hcvadvocate.org> and click on "Community & Support" and then "Support Group Manual."

Note: Alan Franciscus is Executive Director, Hepatitis C Support Project, and Editor-in-Chief of HCV Advocate.



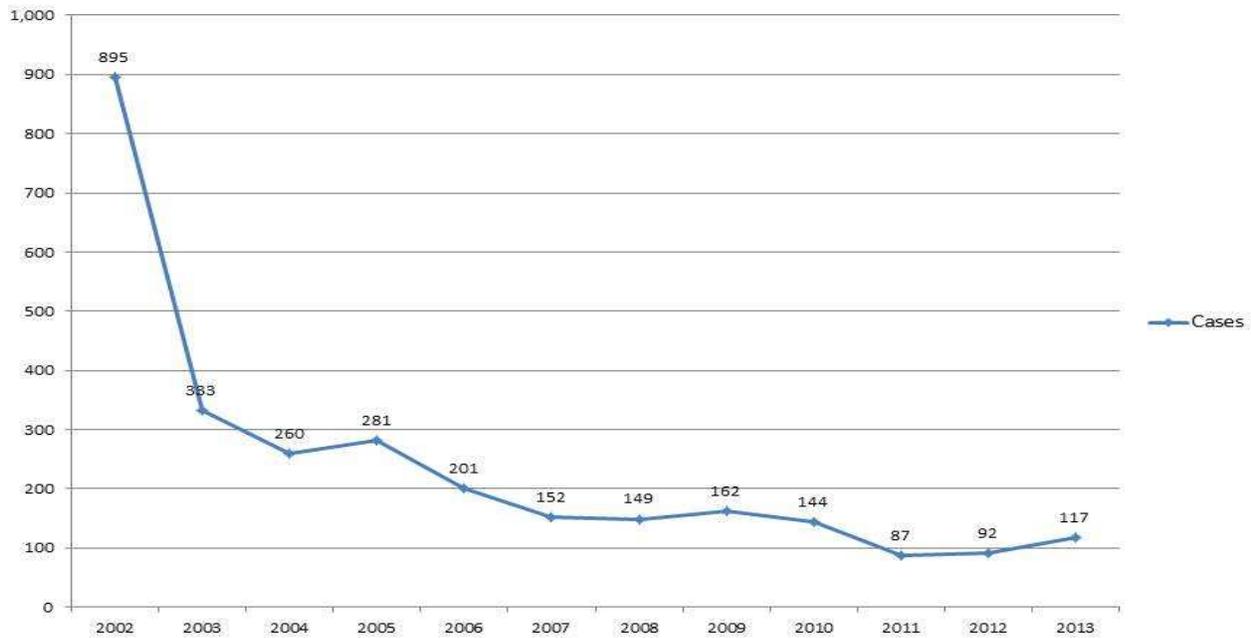
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May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

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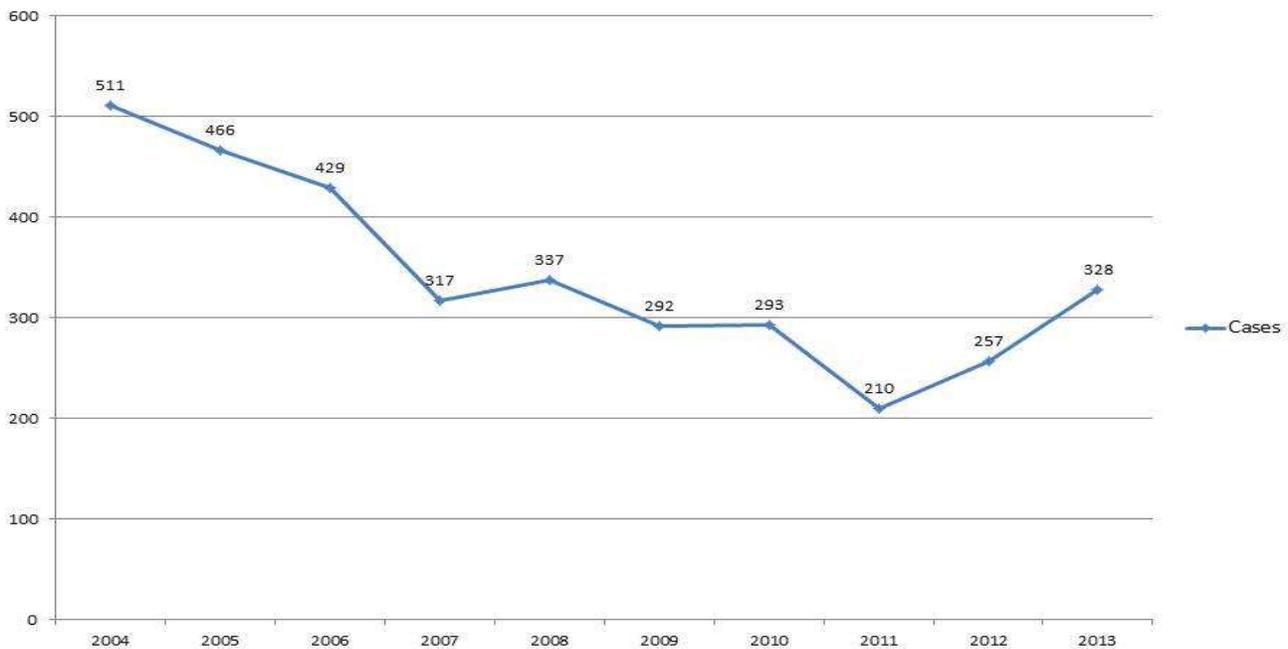
Long Term Trends of Reported Viral Hepatitis Cases in Florida (more on page 8)

**Reported Hepatitis A,
Florida - 2002-2013**



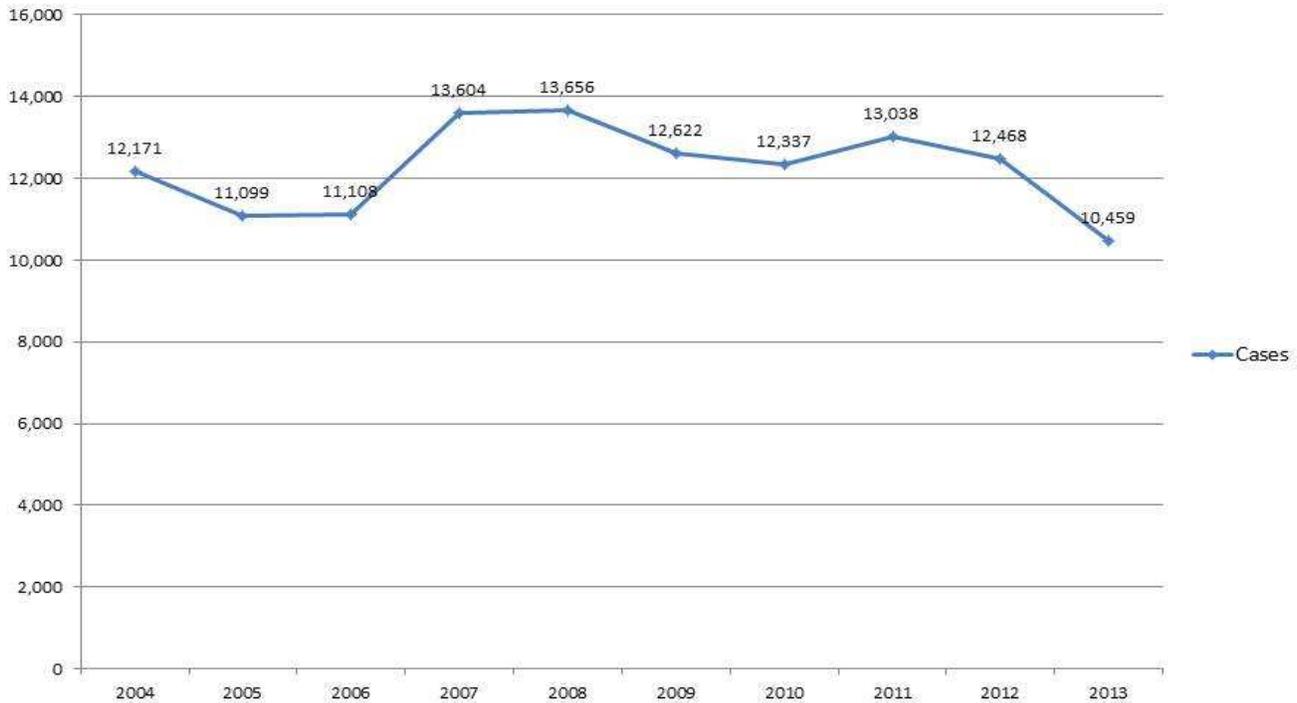
Source: ESSENCE Database, Florida Department of Health, 04/01/2014

**Reported Acute Hepatitis B Cases,
Florida - 2004-2013**



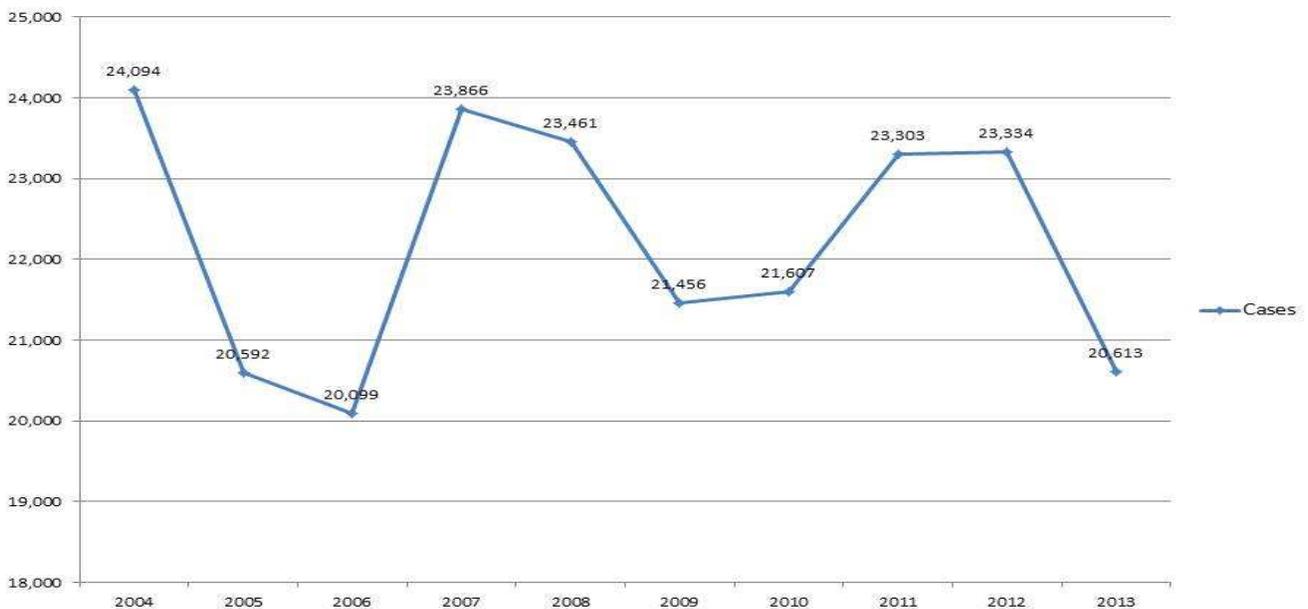
Source: ESSENCE Database, Florida Department of Health, 04/01/2014

Reported Chronic Hepatitis C Cases, "Baby Boomer" Cohort Age 47-67 Years, Florida - 2004-2013



Source: ESSENCE Database, Florida Department of Health, 04/01/2014

Reported Chronic Hepatitis C Cases, Florida - 2004-2013



Source: ESSENCE Database, Florida Department of Health, 04/01/2014

Hepatitis 101 Webinars

By April Crowley

Throughout the year, the HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Section offers "Hepatitis 101: for Nurses, Counselors and Outreach Workers." This webinar is a one-hour training which provides a basic introduction to hepatitis A, B and C. A continuing education credit of one contact hour is available for all nurses in the state of Florida.

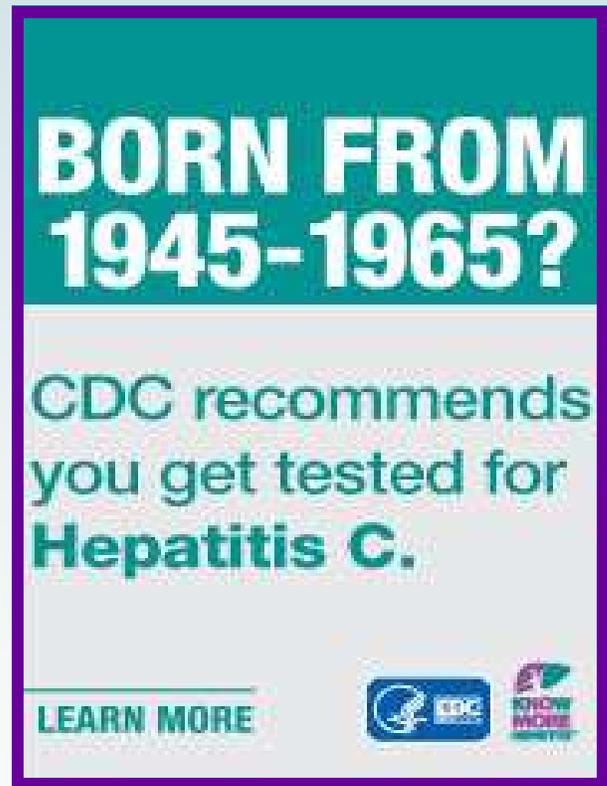
I have noticed a lot of changes in the audience over the years. In the beginning, it was mostly nurses from county health departments who participated. Then, staff from other state agencies became interested in the training. Next, people from community-based organizations, hospitals, county jails and various health centers came on board.

More and more community-based organizations are joining this training. It is encouraging that people from so many different types of businesses are interested in learning about viral hepatitis. Hopefully, they are educating their communities as a result.

To register for Hepatitis 101, go to: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/aids/hep/Hep101/101regform.htm



April Crowley



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