



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Lebanon VA Medical Center

[www.lebanon.va.gov](http://www.lebanon.va.gov)

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**FOR  
IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

## **Lebanon VAMC Is Successfully Treating Veterans with Hepatitis C Virus** *Program Yielding Remarkably High Cure Rates Among Participants*

**For Immediate Release – Oct. 23, 2018**

LEBANON, Pa. – The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs’ Lebanon VA Medical Center announced it has successfully treated more than 550 Veterans who were diagnosed with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

HCV is a long-term infection with a virus that can harm the liver reducing its function and ultimately leading to liver damage and potential liver failure. Persons born between 1945 – 1965 are at the greatest risk of infection. Individuals can become infected through a variety of ways: injection (IV) drug use – past or current, blood transfusions before 1992, snorting cocaine, needle stick injuries in hospitals, body piercing with unsterilized needles, tattoos with unsterilized ink or needles, sharing razors or toothbrushes or sexual transmission.

HCV is treated with oral medications. These pills, called antiviral medications, are usually taken once per day. These antiviral medications are extremely good at attacking the virus and preventing it from multiplying. Treatment is usually 12 weeks long but ranges from 8 to 16 weeks long. The duration depends on the medication, and specific HCV factors in particular patients.

In an untreated state, the hepatitis C virus infects the cells of the liver and then continuously lives there, making copies of itself that circulate in the bloodstream. Antiviral medications can destroy the ability of the virus to reproduce, so the amount of virus in the bloodstream then decreases. The amount of virus in the blood is measured by a viral load (also called HCV RNA).

Treatment is successful when the viral load drops to undetectable levels, which means the virus cannot be detected in the bloodstream at all. The viral load becomes undetectable during treatment and remains undetected after treatment has ended. If there is still no detectable virus in the blood 12 weeks after the end of the treatment, the treatment was successful.

Paul Carnes, PharmD, MS, FACHE, Chief of Pharmacy at Lebanon VAMC states, “The remarkable cure rates our patients are experiencing is inspirational. We want Veterans to enjoy whole health without the destructive consequences of HCV. We encourage all Veterans born between 1945 – 1965 to enroll in VA healthcare and to be screened for HCV.”

The Lebanon VA Medical Center is one of 170 medical centers in the nation with the sole purpose of providing world-class medical care to America’s Veterans. Lebanon VAMC serves a nine county area in South Central Pennsylvania covering Adams, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Schuylkill and York counties. Lebanon VAMC also oversees community clinics located in Lancaster, Mechanicsburg, Pottsville, Wyomissing, York and Fort Indiantown Gap. If you are Veteran, you may be eligible to receive care and benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. To learn more, call 717-228-6000.

For more information about the Lebanon VA Medical Center, visit [www.lebanon.va.gov](http://www.lebanon.va.gov), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/VALebanon](https://www.facebook.com/VALebanon), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/VALebanon](https://www.twitter.com/VALebanon).

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