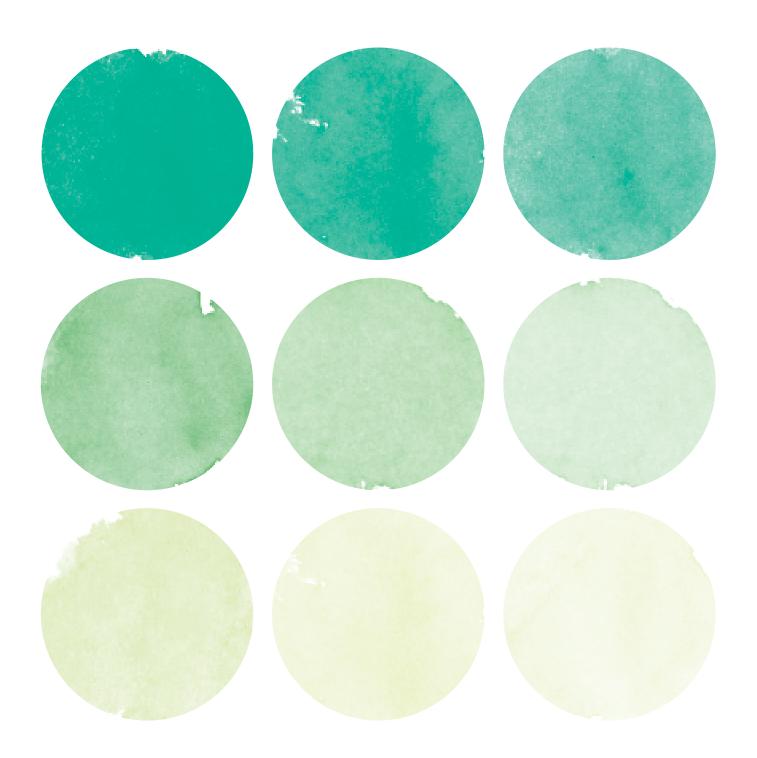


# GLOBAL HEALTH SECTOR STRATEGY ON

# **VIRAL HEPATITIS 2016–2021**

### **TOWARDS ENDING VIRAL HEPATITIS**





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The definitive versions of the global health sector strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, for the period 2016–2021, can be found in the official records of the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly (document WHA69/2016/REC/1).

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# INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Viral hepatitis is an international public health challenge, comparable to other major communicable diseases, including HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Despite the significant burden it places on communities across all global regions, hepatitis has been largely ignored as a health and development priority until recently. It will no longer remain hidden, however, with the adoption of the resolution on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Target 3 is of particular relevance: it calls for specific action to combat viral hepatitis. 2

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, see http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E (accessed 2 April 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Goals, target 3.3: "By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases."

This is the first global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis, a strategy that contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It covers the first six years of the post-2015 health agenda, 2016–2021, building on the Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis Infection: Framework for Global Action,<sup>3</sup> and on two resolutions on viral hepatitis adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2010 and in 2014.<sup>4</sup> The strategy addresses all five hepatitis viruses (hepatitis A, B, C, D and E), with a particular focus on hepatitis B and C, owing to the relative public health burden they represent.

The strategy describes the contribution of the health sector to combating viral hepatitis, towards its elimination as a public health threat. It promotes synergies between viral hepatitis and other health issues, and aligns the hepatitis response with other global health and development strategies, plans and targets. It positions the response to viral hepatitis within the context of universal health coverage — an overarching health target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The strategy outlines a way ahead, and provides:

- A vision of a world where viral hepatitis transmission is halted and everyone living with viral hepatitis has access to safe, affordable and effective care and treatment;
- A goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a major public health threat by 2030;
- Targets that seek to reduce the incidence of chronic hepatitis infection from the current 6–10 million cases of chronic infection to 0.9 million infections by 2030, and to reduce the annual deaths from chronic hepatitis from 1.4 million to less than 0.5 million by 2030. Achieving these targets will require a radical change in the hepatitis response, and will mean that hepatitis is elevated to a higher priority in public health responses.

The strategy must exploit new opportunities, including: increasing public awareness; advances in hepatitis medicines, diagnostics and other technologies; and strengthening commitment to achieve health equity.

The strategy defines a set of priority actions for countries to undertake, and counterbalances this with a set of priority actions for WHO to undertake, in support of countries.

Priority actions are organized under five strategic directions, which are:

Strategic direction 1 – Information for focused action: developing a strong strategic information system to understand viral hepatitis epidemics and focus the response;

Strategic direction 2 – Interventions for impact: defining essential, high-impact interventions on the continuum of hepatitis services that should be included in health benefit packages;

Strategic direction 3 – Delivering for equity: strengthening health and community systems to deliver high-quality services to achieve equitable coverage and maximum impact;

Strategic direction 4 – Financing for sustainability: proposing strategies to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and minimize the risk of financial hardship for those requiring the services;

Strategic direction 5 – Innovation for acceleration: promoting and embracing innovation to drive rapid progress.

<sup>3</sup> Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis Infection: Framework for Global Action, see http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/hepatitis/Framework/en/ (accessed 3 April 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Resolution WHA63.18 was adopted in 2010, and resolution WHA67.6, in 2014.

#### **OUTLINE OF THE STRATEGY**

The strategy has five major components:

- Towards eliminating viral hepatitis —
  reviews the current status of viral hepatitis epidemics and
  responses, identifies opportunities and challenges for the future,
  and argues the case for adequate investment in the health sector
  response to viral hepatitis;
- Framing the strategy –
  describes the three organizing frameworks for the strategy
  (universal health coverage, the continuum of hepatitis services
  and the public health approach);
- Vision, goal, targets and guiding principles presents a set of impact and service coverage targets for 2020 and 2030 to drive the response;
- Strategic directions and priority actions recommends actions to be taken by both countries and WHO under each of five strategic directions; and
- Strategy implementation: leadership, partnerships, accountability, monitoring and evaluation –

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