



Center of Excellence (COE) for Hepatitis C

Background of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and the Rationale for the Development of a COE:

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is the most common chronic blood-borne infection in the United States and is a significant clinical issue in our Geisinger Health Plan (GHP) Family or Medicaid population. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 3.2 million persons are chronically infected. A further increase in HCV diagnoses is expected, as the CDC has recently broadened their HCV screening recommendations to include individuals born between 1945 and 1965. The growing number of people diagnosed with HCV coupled with the complexity of treatment options and emerging therapies make a multidisciplinary team approach essential to ensuring these patients are able to tolerate, and successfully complete, a full course of treatment to ensure optimum results.

Appropriate treatment will prevent transmission, liver disease, further liver damage and complications, and improve outcomes. GHP Family patients requiring HCV treatment should be referred to a COE in HCV management before a course of treatment is initiated in accordance with the GHP Hepatitis C Direct Acting Antiviral Policy 1248.0 F. After the COE evaluation and treatment is initiated, the patient may be transitioned to their local specialist for the remainder of their HCV treatment if co-management is appropriate.

Center of Excellence Criteria:

GHP Family continues to assess the network for other providers that may meet the criteria for designation as a COE in HCV management. The GHP Credentials Committee has established the following criteria for recognition as a COE in HCV management that include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating best practices by using clinically proven health care management techniques
- Measured evidence of favorable outcomes in sustained virologic response comparison rates, discontinuation rates due to adverse events, and medication adherence rates
- A multidisciplinary team including a board certified specialist, nurse educator, clinical pharmacist, psychiatrist, case management professional, and social worker
- Licensed, professional staff dedicated to patient education regarding their condition and optimal treatment
- The capability to manage 50 or more patients with HCV per year
- Leadership consisting of board certified physicians in gastroenterology, hepatology, infectious disease, or transplant who are actively involved in their discipline through clinical research initiatives and further advancement of their specialty



Current Center of Excellence:

Geisinger Medical Center (GMC)'s Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology in Danville, Pennsylvania, is the first COE recognized by GHP Family for the evaluation and treatment of HCV.

Referral Process for Center of Excellence Appointments:

To initiate COE evaluation for your GHP Family patients with HCV, a referral form (Patient Information Checklist) must be completed and attached to supporting documentation and faxed to GMC at (570) 271-5806. The COE will request all medical records be sent to the office prior to the patient's scheduled appointment. Medical records should include labs, screening tests, biopsy or Fibrosure results, and any other medical history documentation that may aid the COE specialist with treatment decisions.

GHP Family is especially concerned with establishing COE evaluation for patients with HCV genotype 1, 2, 3, and 4 infections with advanced fibrosis (F3 or F4, evidenced by biopsy or Fibrosure blood test) or compensated cirrhosis (evidenced by biopsy, imaging, or strong clinical suspicion).

Questions:

For patient questions:

The GHP Family Special Needs Unit is available to work with each patient to ensure that all services are coordinated including travel arrangements and they will have a successful treatment outcome. The GHP Special Needs Unit can be reached at (855) 214-8100.

For provider related questions related to the COE process:

Please contact your GHP Provider Network Management Representative at (800) 876-5357 for more information about the COE process.