

## Readiness to Refer Assessment

**GOALS:** Support patient readiness to engage effectively with hepatitis C treatment prescriber by assessing potential barriers to treatment readiness, supporting patients to address barriers through referral to appropriate services and programs, and educate patient about actions that he or she can take to protect liver and slow hepatitis C disease progression.

These actions can be initiated by primary care providers with patients infected with chronic hepatitis C, including those interested in or waiting for specialist appointments. These action steps support liver health and can help prepare patients interested in hepatitis C treatment to engage successfully with specialists. Currently in Oregon, Medicaid requires prior authorization for hepatitis C treatment medications and limits prescribers to hepatologists, gastroenterologists or other specialty trained providers with experience in Hepatitis C.

**ACTIONS:** Assess patient alcohol and substance use, mental health status and life planning/stability needs and provide referrals to existing treatment programs, community services and social supports. Educate patients about protecting the liver and liver health

### CHECKLIST AND NOTES

- Patient education about liver health, including the impact of alcohol use on hepatitis C progression
    - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Written information provided?  Yes  No  Do not know
      - Health education referral:  Yes  No
      - Date and action: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Written information provided?  Yes  No  Do not know
      - Health education referral:  Yes  No
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Patient interest in hepatitis C treatment
    - Discussed patient interest in hepatitis C treatment, including engagement in screenings and follow up action steps identified with the primary care provider while waiting for specialist appointment
      - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Follow-up action steps
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Alcohol and substance use assessment (See details below)
    - Completed the SBIRT within the last 6-12 months
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Completed CAGE or AUDIT within the last 6-12 months
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Follow-up action steps if needed, including referral and linkage to alcohol or substance abuse treatment and services.
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Mental health Assessments (See details below)
    - Screened for uncontrolled depression, psychosis, or suicidality using validated screening tool such as the Beck Assessment within last year
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
      - Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Follow-up action steps if needed, including referral and linkage to behavioral or mental health treatment and services.
      - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_

## Readiness to Refer *(continued)*

- Life planning, stability and major issues that could impact adherence (See details below)
  - Discussed potential events or issues in the coming year
    - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Discussion Date: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Follow-up action steps if needed, including referral and linkage to community support programs and services.
    - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Date and Action: \_\_\_\_\_

### Alcohol and Substance Use:

- Alcohol consumption, even what is usually considered moderate, can damage the liver of a person with chronic hepatitis C infection and contribute to faster liver disease progression.
- All patients should be evaluated for current alcohol and other substance use, with validated screening instruments such as AUDIT C or CAGE. The presence of current heavy alcohol use (> 14 drinks per week for men or > 7 drinks per week for women), binge alcohol use (>4 drinks per occasion at least once a month), or active injection drug use warrants referral to an addiction specialist before treatment initiation. Patients with active substance or alcohol-use disorders should be carefully considered for therapy in coordination with substance-use treatment specialists.
- SBIRT is a public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for people with substance use disorders and those at risk of developing these disorders. Oregon specific screening forms and tools can be found at: <http://www.sbirtoregon.org/screening.php>

### Behavioral and Mental Health Status

- Behavioral health issues are not absolute contraindications for hepatitis C treatment. However, patients with severe mental health conditions should be engaged in mental health treatment and managed in collaboration with behavioral and mental health providers to determine the risks, benefits and support needed with regard to hepatitis C treatment options.
- Use validated screening tools such as the Beck Depression Inventory to evaluate for depression and suicide ideation. Information and tips for the Beck Depression Inventory and other assessment tools (anxiety, suicide ideation) can be found here: <http://www.beckinstitute.org/beck-inventory-and-scales/>

### Life Planning

- Work with the patient to address any psychosocial factors that could potentially interfere with treatment adherence. Once identified, refer patient to community mental health and social services and programs to address identified challenges. Confirm successful referral with patient and social service providers.
- These risk factors may include, but are not limited to:
  - Transportation challenges, homelessness, or limited phone access
  - Developmental mental delay/decreased cognition or other issues that may impact the patient's ability to understand or follow medication instructions
  - A likely or expected major life event in upcoming months (changing jobs, moving, health procedure)

This tool is meant to support patients and primary care providers to work together to prepare for specialty care and treatment initiation. The information from the completed screenings should be included along with relevant medication information on the patient referral form.