A Corrections Issue

Newer hep C meds may give more prisoners access to the cure.

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Previously released direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) shown to cure hepatitis C were too expensive for state prisons to purchase, especially without the price discounts available to federal prisons and some other government agencies.

But now, activists are excited about lower costs for two newer DAA regimens for hep C: Mavyret (glecaprevir/pibrentasvir), which costs $26,400 for eight weeks, and Vosevi (sofosbuvir/velpatasvir/voxilaprevir), which costs $74,760 for 12 weeks. Compare this with existing therapies that cost as much as $94,500 for a full course of treatment for the viral liver infection, which affects one in three of the 2.2 million individuals currently imprisoned in U.S. jails.

Findings published in the journal Health Affairs revealed that less than 1,000 of the more than 106,000 inmates in state prisons diagnosed with hep C as of January 2015 were receiving treatment. To get access to expensive DAAs currently available, inmates in several states filed lawsuits.

Many hope that the newer, less expensive therapies will help to correct the problem.

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