

NHS plans to be first to eliminate hepatitis C

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NHS leaders want to collaborate with pharmaceutical industry to eliminate Hepatitis C



National Health Service (NHS) England has laid out plans for England to become the first country to eliminate hepatitis C, at least five years earlier than the World Health Organisation's target date of 2030.

NHS leaders called on the pharmaceutical industry to work with them to provide best value for money for treatments to eliminate Hepatitis C.

The NHS has invested in Hepatitis C treatment each year as new treatments became available to improve outcomes for people with the virus but doctors, patient groups and NHS leaders believe it is possible to go further and is encouraging pharma companies to work with them to meet this more ambitious target.

The next round of procurement, which launches in February and is to be the single largest medicines procurement ever done by the NHS, will see new agreements drawn up with drug companies that will involve collaboration to identify more people who are living with hepatitis C who need to be treated.

Experts have predicted that this approach, combined with the NHS sustaining the same level of investment and the best new treatments being used could undoubtedly lead to Hepatitis C being eradicated as a major public health concern in the very near future.

England is one of few countries in Europe where numbers of patients receiving new oral treatments for Hepatitis C are already increasing year on year, enabled by deals previously agreed with industry.

The deals, including 'pay per cure' where the NHS only pays when a patient is cured and a focus on prioritising the sickest patients, have led to a 10% reduction in the number of deaths and the numbers of patients needing a liver transplant have reduced by 50%.