



27 July 2017 – An estimated 325 million people worldwide are living with chronic hepatitis B or C virus infection, according to the World Health Organization ( [WHO](#) )'s [2017 Global Hepatitis Report](#) . Most of these people lack access to life-saving testing and treatment, placing them at a great risk of a slow progression towards chronic liver disease, cancer, and death.

[World Hepatitis Day](#) on 28th of July 2017 is an opportunity to add momentum to all efforts to eliminate hepatitis. The key message of the day is that viral hepatitis is a major global health problem and needs an urgent response. Very few of those infected accessed testing and treatment, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Hepatitis deaths are increasing: since 2000, the total number of deaths from hepatitis has increased by 22%, contributing to an estimated [1.34 million deaths](#) in 2015. The number is comparable with tuberculosis deaths and exceeding deaths from HIV. New hepatitis infections

still continue to occur, mostly hepatitis C. However, achieving the 2030 elimination goal is not overly ambitious. WHO will publish 28 country profiles on 28 July which show that, despite many challenges, the global effort to eliminate hepatitis is gaining ground.

"We are still at an early stage of the viral hepatitis response, but the way forward looks promising," [said](#) Dr Gottfried Hirnschall, Director of WHO's Department of HIV and the Global Hepatitis Programme. "More countries are making hepatitis services available for people in need – a diagnostic test costs less than US\$ 1 and the cure for hepatitis C can be below US\$ 200. But the data clearly highlight the urgency with which we must address the remaining gaps in testing and treatment."

### Additional links:

- [Global Hepatitis Report, 2017](#)
- [World Hepatitis Day 2017 campaign: #ShowYourFace to eliminate hepatitis](#)
- [What can you do for World Hepatitis Day?](#)