

## MEDIA RELEASE

☒ **Information**      ☐ **Advisory**      ☐ **Warning**      ☐ **Update**

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### **St. Clair County Health Department Recognizes Hepatitis Awareness Month**

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and St. Clair County Health Department is encouraging community members to know their status. Hepatitis is a disease that affects the liver. Hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are all different diseases. Each type of hepatitis is caused by a different virus and spread in different ways. Hepatitis A does not cause a long-term infection, although it can make people very sick. Michigan is currently experiencing a statewide hepatitis A outbreak. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C can become chronic, life-long infections and lead to serious health problems. Hepatitis C is a risk for anyone born between 1945 and 1965 so it is important for those in this age group to get tested. Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer stated "The St. Clair County Health Department is keeping an eye on our increasing hepatitis C rates. Between 2012 and 2016 St. Clair County had a two-fold increase in our chronic hepatitis C rates. We are concerned that the disproportionate rise in cases among younger people may indicate disease transmission from illicit drug use. Since Hepatitis C (and B) is spread through contaminated blood, our biggest concern is that these increases are being driven in particular by injection drug use."

May 19<sup>th</sup> is National Hepatitis Testing Day. Make an appointment with your primary care provider to learn your status. Hepatitis A and B can be prevented by vaccination. There is currently no vaccination for hepatitis C. Effective treatments are available to cure hepatitis B and C.

Hepatitis A and B vaccinations are available at the St. Clair County Health Department, located at 3415 28<sup>th</sup> Street in Port Huron, including our office at The Center of Port Huron. Most insurances are accepted. No one is denied service due to inability to pay. Medicaid Enrollment assistance is available. For more information call (810) 987-5300, visit our website [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co) or follow us on social media @scchdmi.

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