Hepatitis C Virus Infection – Alaska, 1999-2002

**Introduction**
In 1996, hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection became a condition reportable to the Section of Epidemiology by healthcare providers and laboratories. In addition to routine Infectious Disease Reports, more detailed epidemiology of Alaska hepatitis C cases was presented in a 1999 Bulletin [http://www.akepi.org/bulletins/docs/rt1999_2.pdf](http://www.akepi.org/bulletins/docs/rt1999_2.pdf). The data in this current bulletin represent an update of the demographic features of hepatitis C cases reported to Epidemiology for the subsequent 4-year period, 1999 through 2002.

**Race distribution**
Race of hepatitis C cases was not specified for over 60% of reports for each year and the entire 4-year period.

**Age and sex distribution**
Age was known for 3,662 of the reported cases in 1999-2002. Note that age at first report may not be the same as age at first diagnosis. The majority (44.4%) of HCV cases were between 40-49 years of age at the time of first report.

**Limitations of data**
Although HCV cases must be reported to Epidemiology, surveillance is passive and it is unknown to what extent data should be made cautiously.

**Recommendations**
1. Complete and accurate information about hepatitis C cases should be reported promptly to Epidemiology. Details about reporting can be found in the Conditions Reportable to Public Health manual, available online at [http://www.akepi.org/pubs/rtr.pdf](http://www.akepi.org/pubs/rtr.pdf).
2. Persons at risk for hepatitis C should be tested. Risk criteria include past or current history of injection drug use (even if only once); persistently abnormal liver function tests; long-term kidney dialysis; and receipt of a blood transfusion or organ transplant prior to 1992, or a blood product for clotting disorders prior to 1987. It is important that persons are aware of their HCV status because of specific precautions to take, e.g., avoiding consumption of alcohol.

For more information, contact your healthcare provider, the Section of Epidemiology (907-269-8000), or visit [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/index.htm)