

A Brief History of Hepatitis C

(Source: Adapted with permission from CATIE (2012). *A brief history of hepatitis C: 1989 – 2012*
<http://www.hepcinfo.ca/en/detail/links-resources/brief-history-hepatitis-c-1989-2012>)

1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The hepatitis C virus is discovered.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A hepatitis C screening test is developed. Blood banks across Canada begin screening blood donations for hepatitis C.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first alpha interferon is approved for the treatment for hepatitis C.• Hepatitis C becomes a notifiable disease in Canada..
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A more sensitive screening test is developed and used to screen blood donations for hepatitis C, helping to prevent hepatitis C transmission through the blood supply in Canada.• It is estimated that 90,000 to 160,000 Canadians contracted hepatitis C through infected blood or blood products between 1960 and 1992.• In response to growing concerns about the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of Canada's blood system, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women form a subcommittee to report on the subject.
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada</i> (called the Krever Inquiry) begins.
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Hepatitis C Society of Canada is founded as a national voluntary health organization whose mission is to fight hepatitis C through prevention, early detection, treatment and support. Over time, the society grows to around 40 chapters across Canada, offering support groups, local peer counseling, publications and seminars.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The final report from the <i>Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada</i> is published.
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Canadian government agrees to offer financial assistance to Canadians infected with hepatitis C through the blood system between January 1, 1986, and July 1, 1990.• Health Canada holds a national consensus conference in Ottawa: <i>Hepatitis C – Prevention and Control: a Public Health Consensus</i>.• The Canadian government establishes the Enhanced Hepatitis Strain Surveillance System, a national initiative to investigate newly identified cases of hepatitis C and acute hepatitis B virus from participating sites.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Canada approves the first combination of alpha interferon and ribavirin for the treatment of hepatitis C.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian government launches the Hepatitis C Prevention, Support and Research Program as part of its response to the report of the <i>Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada</i>. Scheduled to finish in 2004, the program will go on to receive three separate one-year extensions before finally wrapping up in 2007. • The Atlantic Hepatitis C Coalition (now Hepatitis Outreach Society) is founded in Nova Scotia. • The Canadian Harm Reduction Network is formed. • The first glass stems are distributed as part of safer crack kits.
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pegylated interferon is developed for the treatment of hepatitis C. • The 1st Canadian Conference on Hepatitis C, organized by the Canadian Hemophilia Society, takes place in Montreal, Québec.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CATIE-News reports on the possible sexual transmission of hepatitis C among men who have sex with men. This controversial and initially discounted mode of transmission is now well-established. • Actress Pamela Anderson publicly announces that she has hepatitis C. She speaks openly about living with hepatitis C and kicks off a 2002 Canadian Liver Foundation hepatitis campaign. • The Hepatitis C Council of BC (now the Pacific Hepatitis C Network) is founded in British Columbia. • The 1st National Aboriginal Hepatitis C Conference, hosted by NECHI Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute, takes place in Edmonton, Alberta.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insite, North America's first supervised injection facility, opens its doors in Vancouver, British Columbia. • The Canadian Public Health Association announces the establishment of the Canadian Hepatitis C Information Centre as a multi-service information centre (online, in print and by telephone) that collects and circulates hepatitis C educational materials. • The Centre Associatif Polyvalent d'Aide Hépatite C is founded in Québec. • The 2nd National Aboriginal Hepatitis C Conference, hosted by Chee Mamuk, takes place in Vancouver, British Columbia. • The Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver convenes a national consensus conference on the management of viral hepatitis.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 5th edition of the Canadian AIDS Society's HIV Transmission: Guidelines for Assessing Risk includes a section on hepatitis C transmission. • Hepatitis C virus transmission in the prison/inmate population is published in the

	<p>Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Communicable Disease Report. It highlights a significant disproportionate hepatitis C prevalence rate among people in prison (between 19.2% and 39.8%) compared to the general population in Canada (approximately 0.8%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care establishes the Ontario Hepatitis C Secretariat to develop policies and programs that meet the needs of people with hepatitis C in that province. • The 2nd Canadian Conference on Hepatitis C is held in Vancouver, British Columbia. • A provincial committee on hepatitis C, the Comité de travail sur l'état de la situation sur l'hépatite C, is established in Québec.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada's hepatitis C community collaborates to publish Responding to the Epidemic: Recommendations for a Canadian Hepatitis C Strategy. • The 12th International Symposium on HCV & Related Viruses is held in Montreal, Quebec. • Correctional Service Canada and PHAC collaborate in the development of the 'Safer Tattooing Practices Initiative' pilot project, launched in several men's federal institutions and one women's institution. • The 3rd National Aboriginal Hepatitis C Conference, hosted by All Nations Hope AIDS Network, takes place in Regina, Saskatchewan.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safer Tattooing Practices Initiative evaluation report prepared by Correctional Service Canada concludes, among other things, that "initial results indicate potential to reduce harm, reduce exposure to health risk, and enhance the health and safety of staff members, inmates and the general public with higher risk groups." The initiative is canceled. • Commissioned by Correctional Service Canada, PHAC prepares a report of scientific and technical advice on the potential benefits and risks of prison needle exchange programs. The report concludes that, in other jurisdictions, these programs significantly reduce disease transmission and there is no evidence that they increase drug use or compromise institutional safety.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Hepatitis Alliance is founded. • The new National Anti-Drug Strategy explicitly excludes funding for harm reduction measures, while adding significant new funding for additional efforts to enforce criminal laws on drugs. • The Pre-1986/Post-1990 Hepatitis C Class Action Settlement Agreement is approved by the courts. This is a compensation plan for people infected with hepatitis C through the blood system in Canada before 1986 or after 1990. • Without a commitment of funding for the next year, many hepatitis service organizations close their doors, including the Canadian Hepatitis C Information

	<p>Centre and the Hepatitis C Society of Canada.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 4th National Aboriginal Hepatitis C Conference, hosted by Ackaitcho Territory Government, takes place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. • Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver convenes a 2nd national consensus conference on the management of viral hepatitis.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Hepatitis Alliance launches the first World Hepatitis Day on May 19 with a campaign called <i>Am I Number 12?</i> This refers to the statistic that, worldwide, one in every 12 people is living with a form of viral hepatitis. A World Hepatitis Day in Canada planning committee is established under the leadership of Canadian Liver Foundation. Advocacy and awareness-raising activities are organized across Canada including the development of six Canadian government “Asks”. • Canada’s federal Minister of Health, Tony Clement, announces the renewal of the Hepatitis C Prevention, Support and Research Program with the commitment of ongoing funding, annually. • The Hepatitis C Research Initiative, a collaboration between PHAC and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, is announced for a seven year period, ending March 2015.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian Society of International Health signs a Contribution Agreement with PHAC to coordinate and implement a Global Hepatitis C Network. The Society coordinates World Hepatitis Day activities in Canada. • The Canadian Coalition of Organizations Responding to Hepatitis B and C is formed to unite organizations and individuals to focus increased attention on these epidemics and to coordinate advocacy efforts. • CATIE receives federal funding to become the national source for hepatitis C information. • The Canadian government releases the document A Strategic Framework for Action outlining Canada’s future directions, priorities and long term plan to address hepatitis C. • The 5th National Aboriginal Hepatitis C Conference, hosted by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, takes place in Toronto, Ontario.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vienna Declaration, a statement seeking to improve community health and safety by calling for the incorporation of scientific evidence into illicit drug policies, is launched at the 18th International AIDS Conference in Vienna, Austria. • The 63rd World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization passes a viral hepatitis resolution, recognizing “the need to reduce incidence to prevent and control viral hepatitis, to increase access to correct diagnosis and to provide appropriate treatment programmes in all regions.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Health Organization endorses July 28th as World Hepatitis Day, making it the fourth official global health awareness day, alongside HIV, malaria and tuberculosis. • The 1st Canadian HIV/HBV/HCV Co-infection Research Summit is held in Toronto, Ontario. It is organized by the Canadian Treatment Action Council in partnership with many national and community-based organizations.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Court of Canada rules that Insite can continue to operate under a constitutional exception to the <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act</i>. Since this ruling, discussions on supervised injection facilities have gained momentum in cities across the country. • Almost ten years after the last development in hepatitis C treatment, two new medications are approved for genotype 1 hepatitis C. • The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care establishes multidisciplinary treatment and support teams throughout the province to expand access to care and improve treatment outcomes. • The Canadian Coalition of Organizations Responding to Hepatitis B and C releases a report card that assesses provincial, territorial and federal government responses to hepatitis C. • The World Health Organization sponsors its first official World Hepatitis Day with the theme, “This is Hepatitis ... Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere.” • In response to the <i>Resolution on Viral Hepatitis</i>, the World Health Organization establishes a Global Hepatitis Program. • Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver convenes a 3rd national consensus conference on the management of viral hepatitis.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHAC releases the Hepatitis C in Canada: 2005-2010 Surveillance Report. This is the first comprehensive, national report on hepatitis C that summarizes the current data on infection and risk factors in Canada. • The 1st Canadian Symposium on Hepatitis C Virus is held in Montreal, Quebec. • As part of the Tukisiviit Project the first Inuit language forum on sexual health hosted by Pauktuutit takes place in Happy Valley – Goose Bay, Labrador. • The first Inuit-specific consultations about Hepatitis C Inuktitut terminology is hosted by Pauktuutit in Happy Valley – Goose Bay, Labrador.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first Inuit-specific Hepatitis C strategic planning forum is hosted by Pauktuutit in Kuujuaq, Nunavik.