WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?
Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). HCV is the most common blood-borne illness in the United States, and new cases are on the rise. Hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death.\(^1\)

HEROIN AND OPIOIDS
In Iowa, rates of heroin and opioid-related overdoses have increased greatly over the last 10 years. Opioid-related emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations have increased significantly from 2008 through 2015.

HCV IN YOUNG ADULTS AGES 30 & YOUNGER IS ON THE RISE IN IOWA

WHY ARE YOUNG ADULTS GETTING HEPATITIS C?
Injection drug use is the primary driver for increases in new, young hepatitis C cases. The recent increase in abuse of prescription and non-prescription opioids is fueling an increase of hepatitis C among people 30 and under.

HEPATITIS C AND INJECTION DRUG USE
HCV can spread easily through surfaces, equipment, or objects contaminated with infected blood. People who inject drugs can acquire and spread hepatitis C through contaminated needles, syringes, water, cotton, and other equipment.\(^2\) Of the youth and young adults ages 30 and under reported diagnosed in 2016, 66% reported ever using injection drugs to their medical provider.

For more information on hepatitis C virus and to view the recently released Hepatitis C Iowa Profile please visit: http://idph.iowa.gov/hivstdhep/hep/hep-c

\(^1\)Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/cfaq.htm

\(^2\)Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/pdfs/factsheet-pwid.pdf

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