

Panama

Population (in millions) (2011)	3.6
Country classification (2012)	Upper-middle-income
Gross national income per capita (PPP int \$) (2011)	\$14 510
Total health expenditure as % of GDP (2010)	8.10
Per capita total health expenditure (PPP int \$) (2010)	\$1123.43
Per capita government health expenditure (PPP int \$) (2010)	\$843.72
Life expectancy at birth (in years) (2009)	77
Human Development Index (2011)	0.768
Median age (in years) (2010)	27
Total fertility rate per woman (2010)	2.5

The Government of Panama reports as follows.

National coordination

There is no written national strategy or plan that focuses exclusively or primarily on the prevention and control of viral hepatitis.

There is no designated governmental unit/department responsible solely for coordinating and/or carrying out viral hepatitis-related activities. Information was not provided on how many people work full-time on hepatitis-related activities in all government agencies/bodies.

The government does not have a viral hepatitis prevention and control programme that includes activities targeting specific populations.

Awareness-raising and partnerships

It is not known whether the government held events for World Hepatitis Day 2012 or funded other viral hepatitis public awareness campaigns since January 2011.

Information was not provided on whether the government collaborates with in-country civil society groups to develop and implement its viral hepatitis prevention and control programme.

Evidence-based policy and data for action

There is routine surveillance for viral hepatitis. There is a national surveillance system for the following types of acute hepatitis: A, B, C, D and E. Information was not provided on whether there is a national surveillance system for any type of chronic hepatitis.

There are standard case definitions for hepatitis. Deaths, including from hepatitis, are reported to a central registry. Information was not provided on the percentage of hepatitis cases reported as "undifferentiated" or "unknown" hepatitis.

Information was not provided on whether liver cancer cases are registered nationally. Cases with HIV/hepatitis coinfection are not registered nationally.

The government publishes hepatitis disease reports annually.

Hepatitis outbreaks are required to be reported to the government and are further investigated. Information was not provided on whether there is adequate laboratory capacity nationally to support investigation of viral hepatitis outbreaks and other surveillance activities.

Information was not provided on whether there is a national public health research agenda for viral hepatitis. Viral hepatitis serosurveys are not conducted regularly.

Prevention of transmission

There is a national policy on hepatitis A vaccination.

The government has not established the goal of eliminating hepatitis B.

Nationally, 89% of newborn infants in a given recent year received the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth and 94% of one-year-olds (ages 12–23 months) in a given recent year received three doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

There is a national policy that specifically targets mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B (Annex B).

There is a specific national strategy and/or policy/guidelines for preventing hepatitis B and hepatitis C infection in health-care settings. Health-care workers are vaccinated against hepatitis B prior to starting work that might put them at risk of exposure to blood.

There is a national policy on injection safety in health-care settings, which recommends auto-disable syringes for therapeutic injections. Single-use or auto-disable

syringes, needles and cannulas are always available in all health-care facilities.

Official government estimates of the number and percentage of unnecessary injections administered annually in health-care settings are not known.

There is a national infection control policy for blood banks. All donated blood units (including family donations) and blood products nationwide are screened for hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

It is not known whether there is a national policy relating to the prevention of viral hepatitis among people who inject drugs.

The government has guidelines that address how hepatitis A and hepatitis E can be prevented through food and water safety.

Screening, care and treatment

Health professionals obtain the skills and competencies required to effectively care for people with viral hepatitis through schools for health professionals (pre-service education) and on-the-job training.

Information was not provided on whether there are national clinical guidelines for the management of viral hepatitis. There are no national clinical guidelines for the management of HIV, which include recommendations for coinfection with viral hepatitis.

Information was not provided on whether the government has national policies relating to screening and referral to care for hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

People testing for both hepatitis B and hepatitis C register by name; the names are kept confidential within the system. Information was not provided on whether hepatitis B or hepatitis C tests are free of charge for all individuals, but they are compulsory for blood donors.

Information was not provided on whether publicly funded treatment is available for hepatitis B or C.

No drug for treating hepatitis B or hepatitis C is on the national essential medicines list or subsidized by the government.

The Government of Panama welcomes assistance from WHO in one or more areas of viral hepatitis prevention and control (Annex C).