

Bloodborne Infection – Hepatitis C

Why Is This Important?

Hepatitis C is a virus transmitted through exposure to blood from an infected person. Common routes of infection include the sharing of injection drug equipment, tattoo & piercing equipment, and personal hygiene items like razors and toothbrushes. Some people with hepatitis C can clear the virus but most become chronic carriers of the virus and are at risk for developing liver damage or liver cancer.

Hepatitis C may have no signs and symptoms and therefore poses a risk for ongoing transmission.

Based on several equity measures a gap in hepatitis C infection rates persists within the Region's population. From 2004 to 2010, 66% of hepatitis C cases were reported in individuals living in the least advantaged areas of Saskatoon (see [Advancing Health Equity in Health Care – Hepatitis C](#)).

What Is Being Done?

[What's Being Done In Saskatoon Health Region to Reduce STIs and Bloodborne Illness?](#)

To Learn More:

[Destiny's Story \(YouTube\)](#): a personal story from a hepatitis C positive individual living in our Region.

[DMHO Dr. Johnmark Opondo on hepatitis C risks and treatment, 2016](#)

Chief Medical Health Officer's [Call to Action](#)

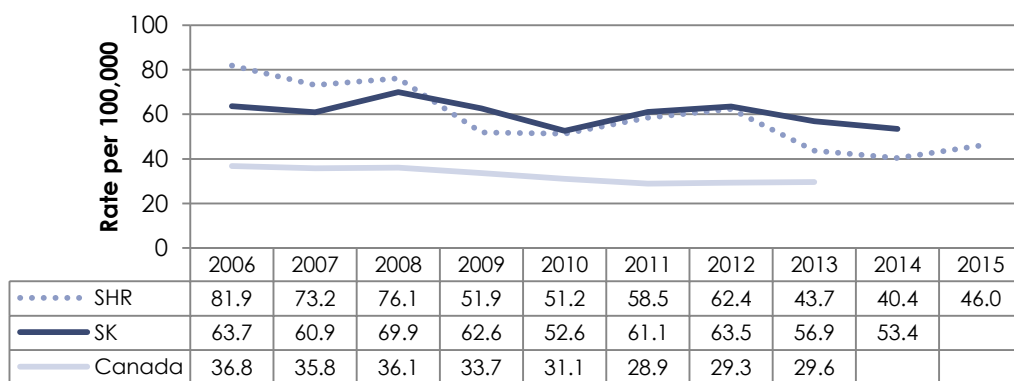
[Advancing Health Equity in Health Care—What is Health Equity?](#)

Highlights

Hepatitis C rates are declining but still high in the Region.

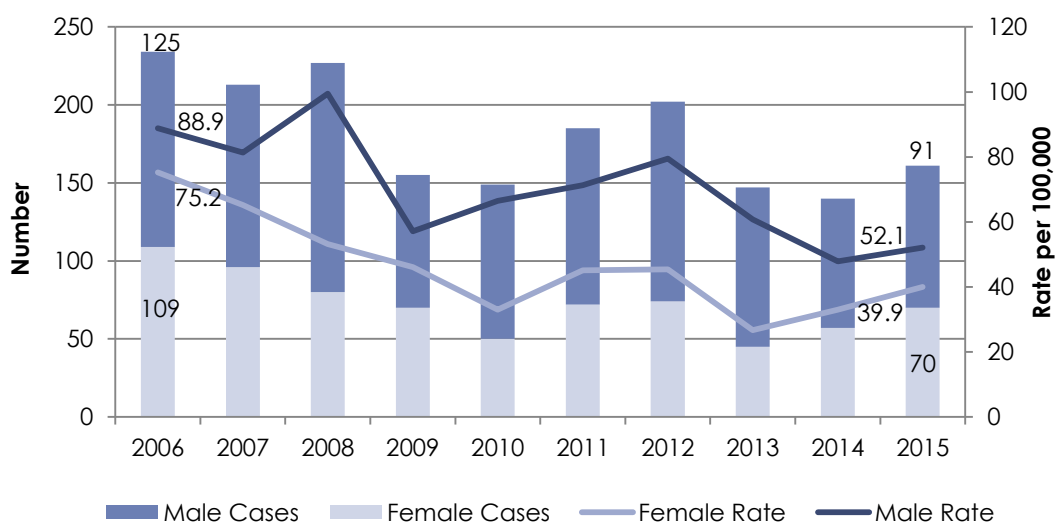
- Hepatitis C rates have steadily decreased in the Region but are still higher than national rates (*Figure 1*).
- In 2015, 161 cases of hepatitis C were reported, including 91 cases in males and 70 cases in females (*Figure 2*). Twenty-six cases were acute infections.
- The Region's rate increased by 14% from the previous year (*Figure 1*).
- Rates vary by age group with the highest rates occurring in the 25 to 39 year-old age group. See [cases and rates by gender and age group](#).
- In 2015 it was estimated that 4.3% of individuals with hepatitis C were co-infected with HIV (not shown). See [About the Data](#).
- In 2015, 61% (98) of individuals with hepatitis C reported injection drug use as a transmission risk, a decrease from 2014. See [transmission risk for hepatitis C](#).

Figure 1: Hepatitis C Rates per 100,000 Population, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatchewan, and Canada, 2006 to 2015



Source: PHAC, Ministry of Health, iPHIS

Figure 2: Hepatitis C Cases and Rates per 100,000 by Gender, Saskatoon Health Region, 2006 to 2015



Source: iPHIS