



December 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about liver disease. There are many different types of liver disease, which can be devastating for sufferers and families.

Around 90% of liver deaths are related to lifestyle and unhealthy environments with the vast majority of these being alcohol related, and it is these diseases that are responsible for a four times increase in liver mortality over the last few decades.

In March 2020, guidance on liver disease was published, which is designed to promote awareness among clinicians, supporting them to increase understanding with their patients, and to help them to be proactive identifying risk factors. Alongside moves to support people to make the best lifestyle choices for their health, it is extremely important to ensure that health professionals have all the information they need to help and treat patients at risk of, and suffering with, liver disease.

Alongside this work, NHS England is establishing liver networks in England, which will enable quicker access to specialised liver services, as well as providing additional clinical advice on disease prevention and referral practice.

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) commits to establishing Alcohol Care Teams in hospitals with the highest rates of alcohol dependence-related admissions over the next five years: delivered in 25% of worst affected hospitals, this could prevent 50,000 admissions over five years. Alcohol can cause many harms, including cirrhosis and hepatitis, so increasing support for people misusing alcohol will also help to reduce instances of liver disease.

Obesity is a leading cause of liver disease, and I welcome the Prime Minister's focus on this issue, through the Obesity Strategy as well as the LTP. These plans seek to tackle the problem of obesity head on. They contain new measures to improve wellbeing, underpinned by a focus on prevention rather than cure. Nutrition training, and an understanding of what is involved in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, will have a much greater place in training for medical professionals, empowering doctors to help patients manage their diet and weight. New measures proposed in the Obesity Strategy include restrictions on promotional deals and advertising, a new 'Better Health' campaign, and displaying calories on menus to help people make healthier choices when eating out. The LTP will also help more than 2.5 million people to benefit from social prescribing, a personal health budget, and new support for managing their own health in partnership with patients' groups and the voluntary sector.

I welcome that progress is being made towards the elimination of hepatitis C. Over 57,000 people have benefitted from new drugs which cure hepatitis C being made available on the NHS over the last few years. Up to 95% of those with a reported response to the treatment have been cured. Furthermore, death registrations for hepatitis C-related end-stage liver disease and cancer fell by 20% between 2015 and 2018, exceeding the 10% reduction by 2020 World Health Organization target.



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More can and will be done to tackle liver disease and I will continue to monitor this issue closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY