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DHHR has help available for those living with Hemophilia

March is National Hemophilia Awareness Month.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources offers education, support and medical assistance to individuals living with hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders.

"Bleeding disorders" is a general term for genetic defects in clotting factors that results in prolonged bleeding. Hemophilia identifies the two best known bleeding disorders, those involving Factor 8 and Factor 9. Classic hemophilia, or Factor 8, occurs in 1 in 5 live male births.

Severe forms of hemophilia lead to spontaneous bleeding that can result in pain, swelling and if untreated over time, permanent damage to the body's joints. According to the National Hemophilia Foundation more than 70 percent of people around the world with hemophilia do not have access to the treatment they need. More than 378 West Virginia residents have been identified with the bleeding disorders.

While there is no cure for hemophilia, treatment does exist. A major concern is the cost for treatment. Patients may require lifelong infusion of replacement clotting factors that are manufactured either from human plasma or recombinant technology.

The DHHR's Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services (OEPS) oversees the state's Hemophilia Program. State Epidemiologist and OEPS Director Dr. Loretta Haddy said, "National Hemophilia Awareness Month serves as a reminder to all of us that there are West Virginia residents that are living with this blood disorder every day. Our goal is to assist them with education, medical assistance and patient support."

Annually, the DHHR's Hemophilia Program assists over 285 patients through its Hemophilia Treatment Centers at CAMC and WVU.

To learn more about National Hemophilia Awareness Month or to find out about available assistance, go online to www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/hemophilia or call 1-800-642-3634.