

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2010

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
House Appropriations Committee
2358-8 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

SUBJECT: FY2011 CDC Viral Hepatitis Prevention Program Funding

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We write to respectfully request that you provide \$50 million for viral hepatitis prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the FY2011 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. This funding would allow for the provision of core prevention services that include hepatitis B and C education, counseling, testing, referral to care, delivery of hepatitis A and B vaccines, and establishing a national surveillance system for chronic hepatitis B and C, which are currently not supported by the federal government. In FY2010, the Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) at CDC received \$19.3 million: the only dedicated federal funding to address viral hepatitis. This amount does not allow for the provision of core prevention services. We appreciate the Committee's past support for viral hepatitis prevention and strongly encourage you to increase the commitment this year.

Nearly 5.3 million Americans are infected with viral hepatitis – roughly six times the number of Americans with HIV – and most of them do not know it. Viral hepatitis causes at least 15,000 deaths each year and is a leading cause of liver cancer, one of the most lethal, expensive and fastest growing cancers in America. It is also a leading cause of death in Americans living with HIV - nearly 25 percent of HIV-positive Americans are also infected with hepatitis C and nearly 10 percent with hepatitis B. In 2007 alone, the CDC estimated that 43,000 Americans were newly infected with hepatitis B and 17,000 with hepatitis C.

An increased investment in viral hepatitis prevention at the CDC will lead to decreased health care costs for chronic viral hepatitis. The total cost of treatment of hepatitis B is approximately \$2.5 billion and hepatitis C costs are expected to increase from \$30 billion to over \$85 billion in 2024, as baby boomers continue to age into Medicare and are likely to develop complications from hepatitis C, requiring expensive medical interventions.

These epidemics are particularly alarming given rising incidence rates and high prevalence rates among disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic populations. It is estimated that one in ten Asian Americans are chronically infected with hepatitis B, especially those from high endemic countries (Asia and sub-Saharan Africa). African Americans are two to three times more likely to

be infected with hepatitis C than Caucasian Americans. Further, the baby boomer population currently accounts for two out of every three cases of chronic hepatitis C.

We urge you to provide \$50 million for the viral hepatitis prevention program at CDC in fiscal year 2011. Thank you for your attention to our concerns, and we look forward to working with you to advance programs for the prevention of these high-cost, chronic infectious diseases.

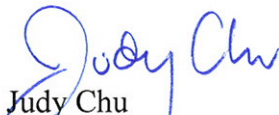
Sincerely,



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



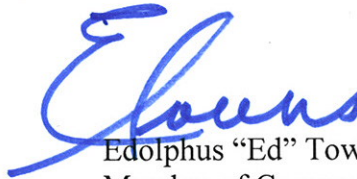
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Donna Christensen
Member of Congress



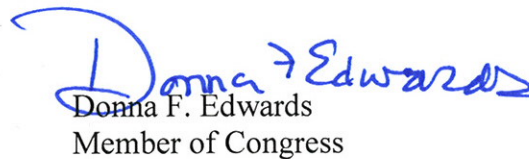
Steven Rothman
Member of Congress



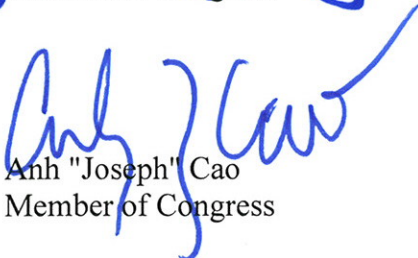
Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Member of Congress



John Conyers
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



Anh "Joseph" Cao
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



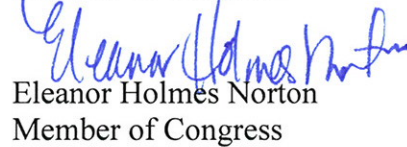
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



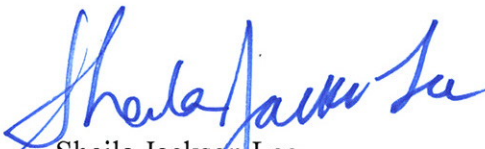
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress



Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress



Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



David Wu
Member of Congress



Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



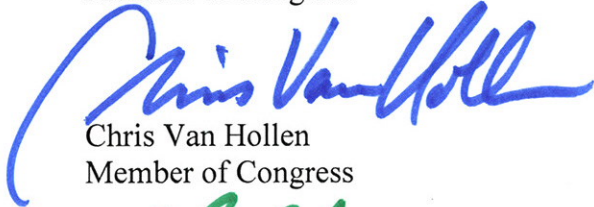
Bill Delahunt
Member of Congress



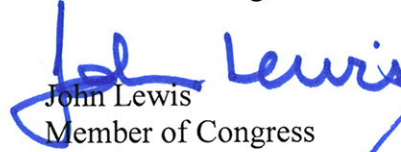
Luis Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



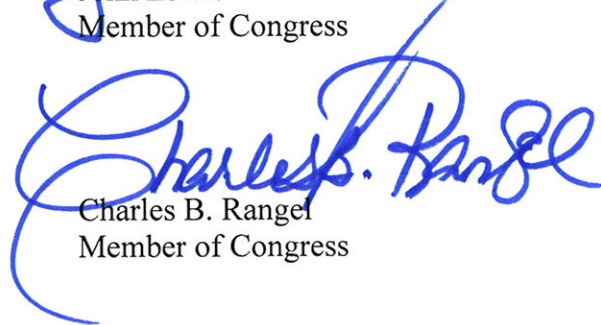
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress




Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress