



Thursday, March 18, 2010

The President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of over 200 domestic and global organizations working on the prevention, treatment, care and control of the viral hepatitis epidemics and the over 5 million Americans living with chronic hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus, we urge you to officially recognize the month of May as National Hepatitis Awareness Month, recognize May 19, 2010 as World Hepatitis Day, and participate in an awareness raising event sometime during the month of May.

Hepatitis is a public health issue that has worldwide impact and is a significant issue in America affecting Americans from all walks of life. Each year up to 15,000 Americans die from hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Worldwide, approximately 2 billion people have been infected with the hepatitis B virus and roughly 350 million live with chronic infection. About 3 to 4 million people are newly infected with the hepatitis C virus each year and about 170 million people are living with chronic infection. An estimated 500,000-700,000 persons die each year due to the acute or chronic consequences of the hepatitis B virus and an estimated 350,000 or more die each year due to liver disease from chronic hepatitis C virus infection.

The recently released Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Hepatitis and Liver Cancer: A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C*, found that the American public and health care providers are not adequately educated about the risk of infection, screening recommendations or treatment options and that our current hepatitis prevention efforts are not working. This is not surprising; the continual lack of governmental leadership and dedication of public resources to the prevention and management of these diseases has kept the American public ill-informed and our public health system ill-equipped to manage these burgeoning epidemics. The release of the IOM report presents an opportunity for the President to acknowledge the domestic and global burden of these diseases. Doing so will increase public awareness and bolster political will for an enhanced governmental response here and abroad.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is considering a comprehensive resolution on the prevention and control of hepatitis that also establishes an official World Hepatitis Day at the World Health Assembly meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland this May. We



encourage the United States to support this resolution. President Obama’s recognition of hepatitis as a global epidemic will further support this effort and send a strong message to governments around the globe that these diseases that impact over 2 billion people in the world can no longer be ignored. In fact, some countries such as Argentina, Australia and the United Kingdom, have already taken the initiative to issue their own proclamations and have participated in awareness-raising activities as an educational means to combat the disease burden that hepatitis has placed on their systems of government, healthcare, labor and economy. Additionally, the 34 member countries of the WHO Executive Board have agreed to support the resolution. It is important to note that World Hepatitis Day has been marked on May 19th for the last 2 years and will be again this year. However, the proposed WHO resolution on World Hepatitis Day suggests July 28th for 2011 and beyond. This was a last-minute change at the WHO Executive Board meeting in January this year and may well be reversed when the resolution is debated at the World Health Assembly this May.

In the U.S., many health organizations are planning awareness events and activities in May to help educate the American public about hepatitis B and C and urge prevention, testing and treatment. The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable is sponsoring a rally on May 19 at the Capitol with the theme “This is hepatitis.” At least 250 hepatitis advocates will march to commemorate those who have been lost and to advocate for increased leadership and an improved response from our country’s leaders. We would welcome your participation at the rally or any World Hepatitis Day events by you or a member of your staff. We invite other leadership to participate in these events as well; from Health and Human Services such as Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Howard Koh, as well as staff from the Domestic Policy Council such as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, Jeff Crowley, and his staff. All of your participation would bring much needed attention to these epidemics. It is our hope that with your support we can begin to stem the spread of these infections and control these epidemics once and for all.

We look forward to working with the White House, Federal agencies and Congress to continue raising the profile of this important health issue.

Sincerely,

Colin Schwartz
Coordinator
HCAP

Martha Saly
Director
NVHR

Charles Gore
President
World Hepatitis Alliance



A Community Resource Network, Lebanon, NH
ADAP Advocacy Association, Washington, DC
After Hours Project, Brooklyn, NY
AIDS Action Baltimore, Baltimore, MD
AIDS Alabama, Birmingham, AL
AIDS Community Care Team, Honolulu, HI
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America, New York, NY
AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, IL
AIDS Project Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
AIDS Support Network, San Luis Obispo, CA
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition, New York, NY
AIDS/HIV Services Group, Charlottesville, VA
ALERT Health, Inc., North Miami, FL
American Academy of HIV Medicine, Washington, DC
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, Alexandria, VA
American Liver Foundation, New York, NY
American Social Health Association, Research Triangle Park, NC
amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, Washington, DC
Arizona Hepatitis C Coalition, Phoenix, AZ
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, San Francisco, CA
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center, San Francisco, CA
Asian American Council, Dayton, OH
Asian American Health Coalition of Greater Houston, Houston, TX
Asian Community Alliance, Inc., Cincinnati, OH
Asian Community Health Coalition, Philadelphia, PA
Asian Health Coalition of Illinois, Chicago, IL
Asian Health Foundation, Parsippany, NJ
Asian Health Services, Oakland, CA
Asian Liver Center at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
Asian Pacific Community in Action, Phoenix, AZ
Asian Pacific Liver Center, Los Angeles, CA
Asian Services In Action, Inc., Cleveland, OH
AsianWeek Foundation, San Francisco, CA
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations, Oakland, CA
B Free CEED: National Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Hepatitis B
Disparities, New York, NY
Boat People SOS, Inc., Falls Church, VA
Bosco's Buddies Inc, Oceanport, NJ
Boulder County AIDS Project, Boulder, CO
Boulder County Public Health, Boulder, CO



C.O.R.E. Medical Clinic, Inc., Sacramento, CA
CAB Health & Recovery Services, Lynn, MA
California Hepatitis Alliance, Sacramento, CA
California Prison Focus, Oakland, CA
CAP Quality Care, Inc., Westbrook, ME
Capitol Community Health Network, Sacramento, CA
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc., Oregon City, OR
Center for African American Policy at the University of Denver, Denver, CO
Center for Asian Health, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Center for Health Improvement, Sacramento, CA
Center for Health Justice, West Hollywood, CA
Center for the Study of Hepatitis C, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York, NY
CHAIN - Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network, Des Moines, IA
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, Springfield, IL
Chicago Recovery Alliance, Chicago, IL
Children's Hospital and Research Center Oakland, Oakland, CA
Chinatown Service Center, Los Angeles, CA
Chinese Association of Greater Toledo, Toledo, OH
City View Pharmacy, Astoria, NY
Citywide Harm Reduction Program, Bronx, NY
Community Access National Network, Washington, DC
Community Health Action of Staten Island, Staten Island, NY
Community Healthcare Network, New York, NY
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), New York, NY
Congregation Geulas Israel, Brooklyn, NY
Doorways, St. Louis, MO
Drug Abuse Alternatives Center, Santa Rosa, CA
Drug Policy Alliance, New York, NY
Eastern Maine AIDS Network, Bangor, ME
Eastern Pennsylvania Hepatitis C Coalition, East Stroudsburg, PA
Education for Healthy Choices, Sacramento, CA
EpiVax, Inc., Providence, RI
Family Services Network of New York, Inc., Brooklyn, NY
Foundation for Healthy Living, New York, NY
Foundation for Research on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Inc (FROST'D), New York, NY
Genentech, San Francisco, CA
Georgia AIDS Coalition, Snellville, GA
Georgia Doty HIV & Hepatitis Community Outreach Inc., Chicago, IL
GlaxoSmithKline, Research Triangle Park, NC
Golden Rule Services, Sacramento, CA



Guam Communication Network, Long Beach, CA
H.E.A.L.S. of the South (Hepatitis Education Awareness and Liver Support), Tallahassee, FL
Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc., New York, NY
Harm Reduction Center of Southern Oregon, Roseburg, OR
Harm Reduction Coalition, New York, NY
Hawaii Island HIV/ AIDS Foundation, Kailua-Kona, HI
HCV Support, Inc., South Dennis, MA
HealthReach Harm Reduction, Augusta, ME
Healthy Asian Americans Project at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Heartland CARES, Inc., Paducah, KY
Hep C Advocate Network, Longview, TX
Hep C Connection, Denver, CO
Hep C Meditations Project, San Francisco, CA & Seattle, WA
Hep Help of New Jersey Alliance, Lanoka Harbor, NJ
Hepatitis B Coalition of WA, WithinReach, Seattle, WA
Hepatitis B Foundation, Doylestown, PA
Hepatitis B Initiative, Washington, DC
Hepatitis C Action & Advocacy Coalition, San Francisco, CA
Hepatitis C Association, Scotch Plains, NJ
Hepatitis C Support Project/HCV Advocate, San Francisco, CA
Hepatitis Education Project, Seattle, WA
Hepatitis Foundation International, Silver Spring, MD
Hepatitis Support Association, Houston, Houston, TX
Hepatitis Support Network of Hawai`i, Honolulu, HI
Hepatitis-HIV-AIDS Awareness Project, OR
HIPS (Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive), Washington, DC
HIV/ AIDS Resource Center, Ypsilanti, MI
HIV/ AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska, Anchorage, AK
HIVictorious, Inc., Madison, WI
HONORreform, Fremont, NE
HOPE Clinic in Houston, Houston, TX
Howard Center Safe Recovery, Burlington, VT
Immunization Action Coalition, St. Paul, MN
Inner City Support for Hepatitis C, Cleveland, OH
International Community Health Services, Seattle, WA
International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS, Washington, DC
Kings Pharmacy, Brooklyn, NY
Life Foundation, Honolulu, HI
Liver Health Today, Houston, TX
LiverHope, Minnetonka, MN



Local Area Support for Hepatitis, Inc., Redding, CA
Los Angeles County Hepatitis B Coalition, Los Angeles, CA
Los Angeles Hepatitis Intervention Project, Los Angeles, CA
Louisville Area Support and Hope for HepC, Louisville, KY
Lowell Community Health Center, Lowell, MA
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, New York, NY
Luck Care Center/ Southside Health Association, Chicago, IL
Maine AIDS Alliance, Portland, ME
Maine Community AIDS Partnership, Portland, ME
Malama Pono Kauai AIDS Project, Lihue, HI
Marin Treatment Center, San Rafael, CA
Maryland Hepatitis C Action, Baltimore, MD
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition, Baltimore, MD
Maryland Partnership for Prevention, Baltimore, MD
Maui AIDS Foundation, Honolulu, HI
Mendocino County AIDS Volunteer Network, Ukiah, CA
Mexican American Alcoholism Program, Inc., Sacramento, CA
Michigan AIDS Coalition, Ferndale, MI
Michigan Hepatitis C Foundation, Grand Rapids, MI
Michigan HIV/ AIDS Council, Lansing, MI
Michigan Positive Action Coalition, Detroit, MI
Midwest Asian Health Association, Chicago, IL
Miriam Hospital HIV/HCV Coinfection Program, Providence, RI
Mo Hepatitis C Alliance, Columbia, MO
Montefiore-Einstein Liver Center, Bronx, NY
National Association of People With AIDS, Washington, DC
National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, New York, NY
National Coalition of STD Directors, Washington, DC
National Hepatitis C Advocacy Council, Brooklyn, NY
National Minority AIDS Council, Washington, DC
National Organization for the Advancement of Chamorro People, Long Beach, CA
National Task Force on Hepatitis B: Focus on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Palo Alto, CA
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, Decatur, GA
Nebraska AIDS Project, Omaha, NE
New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance, Albuquerque, NM
New Mexico POZ Coalition, Albuquerque, NM
New York Downtown Hospital, New York, NY
New York Harm Reduction Educators, Inc., New York, NY
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, Winstom-Salem, NC
North Shore Health Project, Gloucester, MA



Northeastern Pennsylvania Transplant Support Group Inc., East Stroudsburg, PA
Northwest Pennsylvania Rural AIDS Alliance, Clarion, PA
NYC AIDS Housing Network, Brooklyn, NY
NYU Medical Center Hepatitis C Support Group, New York, NY
O'Connor Hospital HCV + HBV Support Group, Delhi, NY
Ohio Inner City Support for Hepatitis C, Cleveland, OH
Orasure Technologies, Bethlehem, PA
Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases, Vancouver
Piedmont HIV Health Care Consortium, Durham, NC
Pierce County AIDS Foundation, Tacoma, WA
Portland Overdose Prevention Project, Portland, OR
Positive Health Project, New York, NY
PPSI & Pharmacy Council on Hepatitis & Liver Diseases, San Rafael, CA
Professional Nursing Alliance, Snellville, GA
Project Aware at Stanley Street Treatment and Resources, Fall River, MA
Project Inform, San Francisco, CA
Sacramento Recovery House, Sacramento, CA
Safe Horizon, New York, NY
San Francisco Hep B Free, San Francisco, CA
San Luis Obispo County Hepatitis C Project, San Luis Obispo, CA
Sonoma County Hepatitis AIDS Risk Reduction Program, Santa Rosa, CA
South Carolina Campaign to End AIDS, Myrtle Beach, SC
South Side Help Center, Chicago, IL
Spears Foundation for Hepatitis C, Franklin, TN
St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction, Bronx, NY
St. Luke's Texas Liver Coalition, Houston, TX
St. Vincents HCV Support Group, Manhattan, NY
Status C Unknown, Medford, NY
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma, Washington
Test Positive Aware Network, Chicago, IL
The AIDS Institute, Washington, DC
The Center for Health Improvement, Sacramento, CA
The Grand Rapids Red Project, Grand Rapids, MI
The Missouri AIDS Task Force, St. Louis, MO
The Next Step Needle Exchange, Augusta, ME
THRIVE(!): The Persons Living With HIV/AIDS Initiative of Colorado, Denver, CO
Tibotec Therapeutics, Trenton, NJ
Total Health Awareness Team, Rockford, IL
Treatment Access Expansion Project, Cambridge, MA
Treatment Action Group, New York, NY
UHAP / Upstate New York Hepatitis C Awareness Project, Delancey, NY



Urban Health Epidemiology Program, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine, Brooklyn, NY
Vermont Harm Reduction Coalition & Opiate Dependence Resource Center, VT
Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc., Cambridge, MA
VidaCare, Inc., New York, NY
Vietnamese Community Health Promotion Project, San Francisco, CA
Village Care of New York, New York, NY
Visionary Health Concepts, Gardiner, NY
Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders, Brooklyn, NY
Washington Heights CORNER Project, New York, NY
Weill Cornell Medical College, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, New York, NY
Wilson Resource Center, Arnolds Park, IA

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The Hepatitis C Appropriations Partnership (HCAP) was established in 2004 to increase federal resources for viral hepatitis and includes community-based organizations, public health and provider associations, national viral hepatitis and HIV organizations, and diagnostic, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies who are working with policy makers and public health officials to increase federal support for viral hepatitis prevention, testing, education, research and treatment.

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable is a coalition of public, private, and voluntary organizations dedicated to developing, implementing and maintaining a national strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States.

World Hepatitis Alliance, a non-governmental organization that represents approximately 200 hepatitis B and hepatitis C patient groups from around the world, provides global leadership and supports action that will halt the death toll and improve the lives of people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C.