



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AAPCHO Commends Introduction of Resolution Designating National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day

WASHINGTON – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) today welcomed the introduction of a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate to designate April 30 as National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day. National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day aims to highlight the need to significantly increase adult hepatitis B testing and vaccination for all people at risk, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The resolution was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.Res.331) by Congressman Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr. (GA-04) and Congresswoman Grace Meng (NY-06) during World Immunization Week (April 24-30) and Minority Health Month (April), and ahead of Hepatitis Awareness Month (May). The resolution was also introduced in the U.S. Senate (S.Res.177) by Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii. Over 75 organizations have signed on in support of the resolution, including the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, as well as AAPCHO. See a full list of endorsing organizations [here](#).

Original co-sponsors of this resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives include Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick, John Lewis, Barbara Lee, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Raul Grijalva, Bonnie Watson Coleman, and Judy Chu. Senator Angus King was an original co-sponsor of the Senate companion resolution that was introduced.

“We commend Representatives Johnson and Meng, Senator Hirono, and our community partners for their continued commitment to tackling hepatitis B, particularly in the setting of the opioid epidemic,” said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director of AAPCHO. “Hepatitis B is preventable—we all play a key part in combating this ‘silent’ disease and ensuring Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and all individuals at risk are aware and have access to critical services they need.”

AAPCHO with Hep B United and the Hepatitis B Foundation—in collaboration with Hepatitis Appropriations Partnership, the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, the AIDS Institute, the Hepatitis Education Project, and National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, also hosted a Congressional briefing today on *Hepatitis B and the Opioid Epidemic: Opportunities to Increase Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination*. View the briefing agenda [here](#) and recording [here](#).

It is estimated that up to 2.2 million individuals are living with chronic hepatitis B in the United States. Nationwide, newly diagnosed cases of hepatitis B rose 20 percent in 2015, with significant regional rises, largely driven by the opioid epidemic, in conjunction with extremely low adult hepatitis B vaccination rates. Only 25 percent of adults over the age of 19 are vaccinated against hepatitis B. States heavily affected by the opioid crisis have reported a significant rise in acute hepatitis B, including Maine with a 729 percent increase from 2015-2017, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Kentucky with a 114 percent increase from 2009-2013, southeastern Massachusetts with a 78 percent increase in 2017, and North Carolina with a 62 percent increase from 2012-2016, underscoring the need to increase adult hepatitis B vaccination in order to prevent new infections from occurring within the opioid epidemic.

One in four individuals with chronic, unmanaged hepatitis B will develop liver cancer, liver failure and/or cirrhosis, and liver cancer only has an 18 percent 5-year survival rate. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are disproportionately impacted by hepatitis B, making up more than half of all cases in the United States and having liver cancer rates that are up to 13 times higher than the general population.

#MORE#

There is great opportunity to increase adult hepatitis B vaccination rates and maintain childhood hepatitis B vaccination rates, in order to successfully eliminate hepatitis B. We applaud Representatives Johnson and Meng and Senator Hirono for their leadership in working to increase awareness of the need for increased adult hepatitis B vaccination through their introduction of this resolution designating April 30 as National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day, and will continue to support federal, state, and local initiatives to increase adult hepatitis B vaccination.

The resolution can be viewed [here](#).

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

Contact

Beverly Quintana, (510) 272-9536 x112, bquintana@aapcho.org

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