



Hepatitis B Foundation
Cause for a Cure

EVENT: 2009 Chronic Viral Hepatitis Congressional Briefing
SPONSORS: Hepatitis B Foundation, in collaboration with AAPCHO and NVHR
HOSTS: Congressmen Mike Honda (CA-D) and Charles Dent (PA-R)

DATE: Tuesday May 19, 2009
TIME: 8:30 – 10:00 am
PLACE: Rayburn Building, B-340, Washington, DC

THEME: *Chronic Viral Hepatitis: A Liver Cancer Story*

GOALS: *To raise awareness that (1) Chronic viral hepatitis is a global health problem, and (2) Create a sense of urgency about the importance of preventing and treating chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C to reduce the significant morbidity and mortality from end-stage liver disease and liver cancer worldwide and in the United States.*

Objectives: To educate legislators and key policy decision-makers about the global incidence of chronic viral hepatitis infections (600 million people with HBV and HCV worldwide of which about 6 million are Americans) and to inform them particularly of the fatal link between chronic hepatitis infections and primary liver cancer, which is one of the fastest growing cancers in the U.S. and the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide. The briefing is scheduled to complement May as *National Hepatitis Awareness Month* and *World Hepatitis Day* on May 19, 2009.

SUMMARY: The Hepatitis B Foundation (HBF), in collaboration with the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) and the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), will sponsor a Congressional briefing on May 19, 2009 to focus on “*Chronic Viral Hepatitis: A Liver Cancer Story*”. The goal is to bring attention to the fact that chronic viral hepatitis infections are a leading cause of liver cancer, which significantly impacts Americans and is one of the few cancers with survival rates of less than 5%. According to the National Cancer Institute, liver cancer is one of the fastest growing cancers in the U.S. during a time when the overall incidence of cancer has stabilized -- and in many cases declined. Primary liver cancer is the 8th leading cause of cancer death among Caucasians in the U.S. and the 3rd leading cause of cancer death among Asian Americans.

Millions of Americans are living with chronic viral hepatitis which leads to premature death from end-stage liver and/or fatal liver cancer. Currently, it is estimated that there are up to 6 million Americans chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV). Due to the lack of a robust national chronic viral hepatitis surveillance system, many research, public health, and advocacy organizations, including the Hepatitis B Foundation, believe that these estimates are much lower than the actual burden of disease.

Despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine, there continue to be almost 100,000 new HBV infections each year in the U.S., with the greatest incidence among young adults between 19-49 years. Also alarming is the fact that up to 50% of Americans infected with HBV and 75% of Americans infected with HCV are unaware of their status. In addition, as many as 30% of Americans infected with HIV are co-infected with HCV, and up to 10% are co-infected with HBV. Even more disturbing, 15,000 or more Americans die each year of chronic viral hepatitis related diseases.

Chronic viral hepatitis must be addressed as an urgent national health priority. It is critical to raise awareness about the critical need for improved education, prevention, and screening. Most important, increased support is required for the care and treatment of the 6 million Americans chronically infected with hepatitis B and C who, without national intervention, will die prematurely.

HEPATITIS B CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING 2009

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HOSTS/MODERATORS

Timothy M. Block, Ph.D., Co-Founder and President, Hepatitis B Foundation

Jeffrey Caballero, MPH, Executive Director, Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

Chris Taylor, Chair, National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable

EXPERT SPEAKER PANEL

- John Ward, M.D., Director, Division of Viral Hepatitis, CDC
- John Niederhuber, M.D., Director, National Cancer Institute, NIH
- Dr. Ira Jacobson, Chief, Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Weill Cornell Medical College
- Ms. Shannon Morris, personal family testimony