

'Making the Link' Between Viral Hepatitis and Liver Cancer

Hepatitis B Foundation to urge Philadelphia city leaders to help decrease liver cancer rates by making chronic HBV and HCV testing and treatment a local priority

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. (May 19, 2016) – Leaders from the [Hepatitis B Foundation](#) met with several members of the Philadelphia City Council on May 19 – National Hepatitis Testing Day as designated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -to urge city officials to support increased testing and treatment for hepatitis B and hepatitis C in Philadelphia's at-risk populations in order to prevent disease and death from liver cancer, the deadliest consequence of chronic viral hepatitis infections.

Foundation leaders and the citywide coalition they created, [Hep B United Philadelphia](#) (HBUP), joined [Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia](#) (HepCAP) and the Prevent Cancer Foundation to co-present a press conference to raise awareness of the silent epidemic of viral hepatitis, the leading cause of liver cancer.

Speakers include:

- Philadelphia City Councilman At-Large David Oh and Councilwoman Cindy Bass issued a proclamation to demonstrate support for the call to action to improve screening, prevention and treatment for hepatitis B and hepatitis C in the city.
- Dr. Walter Tsou, former Philadelphia Health Commissioner, moderated the presentation as a board member of the Hepatitis B Foundation and co-founder of Hep B United Philadelphia.
- Dr. Carolyn Johnson, Philadelphia Acting Deputy Health Commissioner and director of the Division of Disease Control of the Philadelphia Department of Health, spoke about what the city health department is doing to address chronic viral hepatitis.
- Dr. Edith Mitchell, Clinical Professor at Jefferson Health, Director of the Center to Eliminate Cancer Disparities, Program Leader of Gastrointestinal Oncology and President of the National Medical Association, discussed the link between viral hepatitis B and C and liver cancer.
- Carolyn R. Aldigé, President and Founder of the Prevent Cancer Foundation, will highlight liver cancer prevention as a key to addressing hepatitis B and C infection.
- Dr. Hie-Won L. Hann, Professor of Medicine and Director, Liver Disease Prevention Center at Jefferson University Hospital, discussed the impact of hepatitis B and liver cancer on local Asian and Pacific Islander communities, who are disproportionately affected.
- Dr. Philip Siu, Medical Director of Chinatown Medical Services in Philadelphia introduced his patient Ms. Yang who shared her personal journey with chronic hepatitis B infection.

This press conference was held to promote National Hepatitis Testing Day and to highlight the silent epidemic of hepatitis B and C infection which, combined, affect more than 6 million Americans, most of whom are unaware that they are infected. Chronic viral hepatitis is the leading cause of primary liver cancer, which is the second deadliest cancer in the U.S. While rates of other cancers are declining, the rate of liver cancer is increasing and the 5-year survival rate is less than 12 percent. Making the link between chronic viral hepatitis and liver cancer is essential to saving lives.

Hepatitis B is A Philadelphia Story: Dr. Baruch Blumberg, Fox Chase Cancer Center, discovered the hepatitis B virus for which he won the Nobel Prize. He also invented the first hepatitis B vaccine that is now manufactured by two companies, Merck and GSK, both headquartered in the Philadelphia region.

The first successful animal model for testing the current approved medications was discovered at the Philadelphia Zoo – an infected groundhog. The Hepatitis B Foundation, which was co-founded by Dr. Blumberg, is the only national nonprofit dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and was established just outside Philadelphia in Bucks County.

About the Hepatitis B Foundation: The Hepatitis B Foundation is the nation's leading nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. To learn more, go to <http://www.hepb.org>, read our blog at <http://wp.hepb.org>, follow us on Twitter [@HepBFoundation](#), find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/hepbfoundation or call 215-489-4900.

About Hep B United Philadelphia: Hep B United Philadelphia, established by the Hepatitis B Foundation, seeks to increase the visibility of hepatitis B and liver cancer as an urgent health priority by increasing hepatitis B testing and vaccination rates, particularly among at-risk communities, and involving and mobilizing stakeholders and policy decision-makers to improve access to care for both the prevention and treatment of hepatitis B and liver cancer. To learn more, go to www.hepbunitedphiladelphia.org.

About HepCAP: HepCAP works to position Philadelphia as a national leader in the fight against hepatitis C. By teaming up with specialists and community members, HepCAP aims to increase awareness of hepatitis C, while improving local prevention, testing and treatment services. For information on our bi-monthly meetings, go to www.hepcap.org.

About Prevent Cancer Foundation: Since 1985, the Prevent Cancer Foundation has invested more than \$142 million in support of cancer prevention and early detection research, education, outreach and advocacy nationwide and has played a pivotal role in developing a body of knowledge of prevention and early detection strategies. For more information, please visit www.preventcancer.org.

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