

May ABAC Coalition Call 2025 Notes

Updates and Announcements

Membership Form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe5cXRyx8NhA4dmZ9eC55gVK2zvn3oTIXKAAmgneu9GGRZ7ZA/viewform>

Logo Contest: <https://forms.gle/QGATdChqbtwPo9Va8>

WhatsApp Group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/GrM9o38fk4h6JeQqOTCg4U>

Coalition Website: <https://www.hepb.org/research-and-programs/public-health-programs/african-hepatitis-b-advocacy-coalition-abac/>

Training Hub: <https://hepbtraining.org/>

Fact Sheets & Educational Resources: <https://www.hepb.org/research-and-programs/public-health-programs/global-resources/>

Anti-Discrimination Resources: <https://www.hepb.org/resources-and-support/hepatitis-b-foundations-discrimination-registry/>

Hep B 101 Presentation by Su Wang

Dr. Su Wang is the Medical Director for the Center for Asian Health at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, as well as the Global Health Advisor for the Hepatitis B Foundation.

Personal Story Living with Hepatitis B

- Dr. Wang works as a primary care provider while living with hepatitis B and has firsthand experiences associated with diagnosis and management. This has greatly shaped her own experiences as a provider and patient, and directly impacts her commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of communities impacted by hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B Basics

- Hepatitis B is a virus that damages the liver. Without proper treatment and monitoring, it can cause liver cancer.
- Vaccination effectively prevents new hepatitis B infections for those who have not been exposed.

- Western Pacific, African, and Southeast Asian regions have the highest burden of hepatitis B globally.
- In the United States, hepatitis B disproportionately impacts Asian and African populations.

Hepatitis Delta

- Hepatitis Delta is a co-infection of HBV, and while not as common, it can cause serious damage to the liver such as cirrhosis or cancer without proper intervention.
- Only those who have hepatitis B can get hepatitis Delta.
- Globally, 5% to 10% of people around the world are coinfecting with hepatitis B and hepatitis delta.

Hepatitis B and Cancer Development

- The hepatitis B virus produces a new virus within liver cells. Symptoms are not always visible but eventually, the liver can become inflamed over time, especially when there is a lot of viral reproduction occurring. This can damage the liver over time. When the damage is too severe, the liver gets scarred and cannot work as well, or liver cancer can develop.

HBV Care and Treatment

- Without proper treatment, the chances of liver damage or cirrhosis (serious scarring) can be higher. Hepatitis B treatments are available as antiviral medications and immune modulator drugs to prevent serious liver damage and liver cancer.
- The treatments for hepatitis B work to reduce HBV DNA and boost the immune system to fight the infection by preventing replication of HBV DNA.
- Aside from treatment, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This includes avoiding alcohol, quitting smoking, eating healthy foods, exercising, and maintaining a healthy weight.
- Make sure to get HBV blood tests every six months, follow up with providers, and get screened for liver cancer.
- The conversation about starting or stopping treatment for hepatitis B is one that includes shared decision-making from patients and providers. Providers should take into account the cultural considerations, preferences and values of their patients. It is important to share knowledge about treatment options, side effects, and the role of treatment in preventing cancer before prescribing medication to

patients. It's important for patients to ask questions and learn more about their health.

Discussion

Considerations for treatment in the African context

- Treat everyone early, lab access is not needed for viral load in places with limited access and affordability. Refer to guidelines for treatment recommendations.

Effective Strategies to Engage Policymakers

- Coalition training to help with advocacy, use data to inform policymakers. It is important to show data on the ground and in clinics and community centers and not just health systems and academic clinics
- Engage storytellers and put the patient voice at the center for all conversations regarding policy change

HBIG Availability in Africa

- HBIG is recommended with the birth dose but in contexts where it is not available, it's important to prioritize timely birth dose.