



Advocacy. Awareness. Access.

CALIFORNIA HEPATITIS ALLIANCE

CalHEP

California Hepatitis Alliance

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ADVOCACY



California Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Strategic Plan, 2010-2014

California now has a statewide plan!

Congratulations CalHEP member organizations, many of you participated in developing the California Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Strategic Plan, 2010-2014. This plan was developed by the CDPH through collaborative efforts that included a stakeholder group of more than 80 representatives from a broad range of State agencies, local health departments, community-based organizations, membership organizations, and individuals living with or affected by hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV). The plan highlights the serious, costly, and significant public health problem of hepatitis B and C in California and outlines strategic directions for reducing both HBV and HCV related liver disease and death.

Key Highlights from the California Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Strategic Plan

- 1) Improving surveillance and data use
The plan calls for generating better surveillance reports at the local and statewide level to develop an accurate epidemiologic profile of adult viral hepatitis in California.
- 2) Educating the public, providers, and policymakers
The plan calls for a) improving clinicians' knowledge and adherence to viral hepatitis screening, vaccination, and treatment guidelines; b) improving viral hepatitis awareness among the public, social service providers, and health care professionals who serve people at risk; and c) improving awareness of what resources are available for viral hepatitis screening, vaccination, social support, and linkages to care.
- 3) Targeting and integrating services and building infrastructure
The plan calls for increasing viral hepatitis testing, vaccination, and prevention services in settings serving at-risk adults, such as community health centers; pharmacies, HIV and STD clinics, mental health and drug treatment programs, prisons and jails, and syringe access programs.

CalHEP's Support for the California Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Strategic Plan

As you know, CalHEP's primary goal is to eliminate health disparities related to hepatitis by improving state policies as well as systems of prevention and care. Specifically, CalHEP aims to change the way the California public health system addresses viral hepatitis through advocacy and education. For the past three years, CalHEP has led a concerted effort to provoke policymakers to commit to the defeat of viral hepatitis in California. Our membership now includes more than 85 public and private

CALHEP WEBINAR!
California's Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Hepatitis B and C

CalHEP is hosting a Webinar that will present the information contained within the California Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Strategic Plan, the Institute of Medicine's report on viral hepatitis, and will offer lessons from several member organizations on pioneering advocacy efforts on the local level. The aim is to make you familiar with some incremental steps that can be taken to support our national efforts, our state policy and advocacy efforts, and enhance your local work. There will be a question and answer session with the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, the California Department of Public Health Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator, and two experts presenting their successes with both Hepatitis B and C.

Tuesday, February 9, 2010, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
For webinar information please go to the CalHEP website [calendar](#).

IN THE SPOTLIGHT
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS MAKING THE NEWS!



The HEPATITIS C GENERATION
Thanks to a disease that lays dormant for up to 30 years, Baby Boomers well past their wild years are starting to suffer the consequences.

When Alan Franciscus was diagnosed with hepatitis C in 1996, his first question was, "Am I going to die?" When his doctor assured him that many treatment options were available, he had a second question: "What is hepatitis C?" Looking back, Franciscus, a 61 year-old San Francisco resident says: "One of the most disturbing things to me was I had never heard of it. I really did not know a thing about it." To read more about this story check out the January 11, 2010 edition of **Newsweek**. To learn more about Alan and his work look to the **HCV Advocate**.



organizations involved in hepatitis advocacy, prevention, and treatment. CalHEP's elected steering committee includes medical providers, educators, and advocates that serve both hepatitis B and C patient communities. CalHEP's 2010 program activities are aimed to **advocate for legislation to implement a comprehensive viral hepatitis program and viral hepatitis prevention services in California. We will**

**Introduce legislation to implement specific aspects of the recently published California Viral Hepatitis Strategic Plan.*

**Support bills to improve syringe access through pharmacies and syringe exchange programs.*

**Advocate for a budget allocation to increase the number of Californians tested for HBV/HCV, vaccinated against HBV, and funds to support prevention through syringe exchange programs.*

**Educate the legislature.*

AWARENESS



INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
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IOM Report Recommends Ways to Boost Awareness and Concludes that the Current Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Hepatitis is NOT Working

"Hepatitis and Liver Cancer: A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C," a report from The Institute of Medicine (IOM), was just released. The IOM is an independent, nonprofit organization that works outside of government to provide unbiased and authoritative advice to decision makers and the public.

We know that viral hepatitis (both chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C) causes thousands of cases of liver cancer, liver disease, and death each year. We know that the Asian, Pacific Islander, black, and intravenous drug use communities bare the greatest burden with this disease. We know that these infections account for nearly half of the liver transplantations that are performed annually. We know viral hepatitis affects three to five times as many Americans as HIV/AIDS.

And now the new report from the Institute of Medicine recommends ways to boost awareness among health care and social service providers as well as the general public with a campaign similar to the effort that succeeded in increasing recognition, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The report also outlines steps to improve screening, vaccination, treatment, and control of viral hepatitis. *The Institute of Medicine* (January 2010).

ACCESS

Congress Repeals Needle Exchange Funding Ban

We did it! Through collective effort we are improving Federal hepatitis and HIV prevention policy! CalHEP and our collaborating partners have sent many action alerts asking you to urge Senators Feinstein and Boxer, and your Congressperson, to lift the long-standing ban on the use of Federal funds to support syringe exchange programs. On your behalf, CalHEP wrote the California Congressional Delegation asking to lift the ban. Our contribution to this local and national effort has contributed to great success in Congress and now, within the massive appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives today, and due for a vote in the Senate this weekend, is language lifting the ban on the use of Federal funds to support syringe exchange programs. Other groups supporting a repeal of the ban include the Harm Reduction Coalition, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League. Read the



FOX NEWS AT 5: RALLYING FOR INCREASES IN TESTING AND TREATMENT FOR AT-RISK PEOPLE

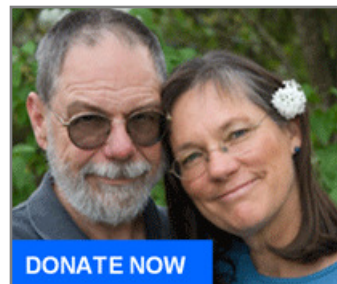
Health care workers and patients held a rally outside the Alameda county health department. They say Hepatitis C causes 10,000 deaths a year. They say the state doesn't allocate any money. Alameda county does not have a systematic testing program. What we would like to do is try to encourage the state to offer testing to at-risk individuals in the state and to get the county hospitals to start treating hepatitis again. It's estimated there are 700,000 people with hepatitis in California. 30,000 of them in Alameda county and that half of them don't know it ([KTUV-FOX SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND-SAN JOSE, CA, reported on November 18 2009.](#)

EVEN AS AWARENESS OF HEPATITIS C GROWS, THE SCANT RESOURCES DEVOTED TO ITS TREATMENT ARE BEING SLASHED.

Dr. Diana Sylvestre is not an alarmist. But when it comes to the hepatitis C virus (HCV) — the country's number one blood-borne pathogen — she says we are in the midst of a grave public health crisis with Oakland as an epicenter. And that's inexcusable, she believes, because hepatitis C can be beaten through treatment. Many of the infected experience no symptoms, and those requiring care have a good chance of clearing the virus with medication. But even as awareness of the problem has grown, the already-scant resources devoted to it have been slashed. ([The Epicenter of a Public Health Crisis, Eastbayexpress.com, By Julia Landau, November 18, 2009.](#)

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Questions or comments? Contact Michele Peterson, associate director of community health programs for CHI, at mpeterson@chipolicy.org or 916-930-9200

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