



September 30, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Appropriations Committee  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Appropriations Committee  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to support the House-passed **funding level for viral hepatitis prevention of \$20.1 million** in the final FY2010 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. While the viral hepatitis community has identified a funding need of \$50 million in FY2010, we believe this small increase of \$1.8 million over the current budget of \$18.3 million is a first step in restoring the viral hepatitis program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to its FY2001 funding level of \$25 million. We support the House and Senate's complementary report language and the Senate's request for a professional judgment budget for viral hepatitis. A transparent and full picture of CDC's budget for viral hepatitis and the articulation of the resources necessary for a prevention program that would actually provide prevention services have long been in order. While we appreciate the House report language encouraging CDC to target the \$1.8 million increase to test and identify chronically infected persons and to help establish chronic viral hepatitis state surveillance systems, this level of funding is insufficient for the CDC to do so.

Hepatitis B and C affect at least six million Americans, the vast majority of whom do not know they are infected. Viral hepatitis can lead to chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, liver cancer and liver failure and each year, these complications claim 15,000 lives. The viral hepatitis community has asked for \$50 million for awareness, prevention and control initiatives, to boost CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) current funding of \$18.3 million, a woefully insufficient amount to address this crisis. While operating on the smallest Division budget for the prevention of infectious diseases within CDC, DVH cannot prevent and manage these epidemics under its current fiscal constraints. States and cities receive a total of \$5 million, which averages to a \$90,000 award per state. This is only enough for a single staff position, far less than what is needed for the provision of core prevention services including hepatitis B and C education, counseling, testing, and referral, in addition to delivering the hepatitis A and B vaccines, and establishing a surveillance system for chronic hepatitis B and C.

It is absolutely essential and urgent that we act aggressively to address the rising death rate caused by viral hepatitis and the rising incidence rate of viral hepatitis among disproportionately impacted groups in the United States. In 2007 alone, the CDC estimated that 43,000 Americans were newly infected with hepatitis B and 17,000 with hepatitis C. Most people living with hepatitis B and over three-fourths of people living with hepatitis C are unaware that they are infected. Further, the baby boomer population currently accounts for two out of every three cases of chronic hepatitis C. As these Americans continue to age, they are likely to develop complications from hepatitis C and require expensive medical interventions. Unfortunately, it is believed that these estimates of hepatitis B and C infections are just the tip of the iceberg, since we lack sufficient data in the absence of an adequate surveillance system. It is also estimated that this epidemic will increase costs by billions of dollars to private insurers and public systems of health such as Medicare and Medicaid, and account for additional billions lost due to decreased productivity from the millions of American workers suffering from chronic hepatitis B and C.



A strong public health response is needed to meet the challenges of these costly diseases. The viral hepatitis community welcomes the opportunity to work with you and your staff on this important issue and to gain support for increased resources to prevent this devastating epidemic. Please contact Colin Schwartz with the Hepatitis C Appropriations Partnership at 202.434.8005 or [cschwartz@NASTAD.org](mailto:cschwartz@NASTAD.org) if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A Community Resource Network, Lebanon, NH  
ADAP Advocacy Association, Washington, DC  
After Hours Project, Brooklyn, NY  
AIDS Action Baltimore, Baltimore, MD  
AIDS Action Council, Washington, DC  
AIDS Alabama, Birmingham, AL  
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America, New York, NY  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
AIDS Project Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA  
AIDS Support Network, San Luis Obispo, CA  
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, OH  
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition, Boston, MA  
AIDS Treatment Data Network, New York, NY  
American Academy of HIV Medicine, Washington, DC  
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, Alexandria, VA  
American Liver Foundation, New York, NY  
Arizona Hepatitis C Coalition, Phoenix, AZ  
Asian Health Coalition of Illinois, Chicago, IL  
Asian Health Services, Oakland, CA  
Asian Liver Center at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA  
Asian Pacific Community in Action, Phoenix, AZ  
Asian Pacific Liver Center (APLC), Los Angeles, CA  
AsianWeek Foundation, San Francisco CA  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), Oakland, CA  
B Free CEED: National Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Hepatitis B Disparities, New York, NY  
Bosco's Buddies Inc, Oceanport, NJ  
Boulder County AIDS Project, Boulder, CO  
C.O.R.E. Medical Clinic, Inc., Sacramento, CA  
CAB Health & Recovery Services, Lynn, MA  
California Hepatitis Alliance (CalHEP), Sacramento, CA  
California Prison Focus, Oakland, CA  
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc., Oregon City, OR  
Center for Health Justice, West Hollywood, CA  
Center for the Study of Hepatitis C, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York, New York  
Chicago Recovery Alliance, Chicago, IL  
Chinatown Service Center, Los Angeles, CA  
CitiWide Harm Reduction, Bronx, NY  
Community Health Action of Staten Island, Staten Island, NY  
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP), Providence, RI  
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN), IA  
Don & Georgia Doty HIV & Hepatitis Community Outreach Inc, Chicago, IL  
Doorways, St. Louis, MO



Eastern Pennsylvania Hepatitis C Coalition, East Stroudsburg, PA  
Education for Healthy Choices, Sacramento, CA  
Family Services Network of New York, Inc., Brooklyn, NY  
Foundation for Research on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Inc (FROST'D), New York, NY  
Georgia AIDS Coalition, Snellville, GA  
Guam Communication Network (GCN), Long Beach, CA  
H.E.A.L.S of the South (Hepatitis Education Awareness and Liver Support), Tallahassee, FL  
Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc., New York, NY  
Harm Reduction Center of Southern Oregon, Roseburg, OR  
Harm Reduction Coalition, New York, NY  
HCV Support, Inc., South Dennis, MA  
Healthy Asian Americans Project at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Heartland CARES, Inc., Paducah, KY  
Hep C Connection, Denver, CO  
Hep Help of New Jersey Alliance, Inc., Lanoka Harbor, NJ  
Hepatitis B Coalition of WA, WithinReach, Seattle, WA  
Hepatitis B Foundation, Doylestown, PA  
Hepatitis C Association, Scotch Plains, NJ  
Hepatitis C Support Project, San Francisco, CA  
Hepatitis Education Project, Seattle, WA  
Hepatitis Foundation International, Silver Spring, MD  
Hepatitis Support Association, Houston, TX  
Hepatitis Support Network of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI  
hepCmeditations project, Seattle WA and San Francisco, CA  
HIPS (Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive), Washington, DC  
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska, Anchorage, AK  
HIVictorious, Inc., Madison, WI  
HOPE Clinic in Houston, Houston, TX  
Immunization Action Coalition, St. Paul, MN  
International Community Health Services, Seattle, WA  
LiverHope, Minnetonka, MN  
Los Angeles County Hepatitis B Coalition, Los Angeles, CA  
Los Angeles Hepatitis Intervention Project (LA HIP), Los Angeles, CA  
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, New York, NY  
Marin Treatment Center, San Rafael, CA  
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition, Baltimore, MD  
Mexican American Alcoholism Program (MAAP), Inc., Sacramento, CA  
Michigan AIDS Coalition, Ferndale, MI  
Missouri AIDS Task Force, St. Louis, MO  
Mo Hepatitis C Alliance, Columbia, MO  
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, Washington, DC  
National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA), Washington, DC  
National Coalition of STD Directors, Washington, DC  
National Hepatitis C Advocacy Council, Brooklyn, NY  
National Minority AIDS Council, Washington, DC  
National Organization for the Advancement of Chamorro People (NOACP), Long Beach, CA  
National Task Force on Hepatitis B: Focus on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Palo Alto, CA  
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, Atlanta, GA  
Nebraska AIDS Project, Omaha, NE  
New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance, Albuquerque, NM



New York Harm Reduction Educators, Bronx, NY  
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, Winston-Salem, NC  
North Shore Health Project, Gloucester, MA  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Transplant Support Group Inc., East Stroudsburg, PA  
NYC AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), Brooklyn, NY  
O'Connor Hospital HCV + HBV Support Group, Delhi, NY  
Ohio Inner City Support for Hepatitis C, Cleveland, OH  
OraSure Technologies Inc., Bethlehem, PA  
Pierce County AIDS Foundation, Tacoma, WA  
Portland Overdose Prevention Project, Portland, OR  
Positive Health Project, Inc., New York, NY  
Project Inform, San Francisco, CA  
Safe Horizon, New York, NY  
San Francisco Hep B Free, San Francisco CA  
San Luis Obispo County Hepatitis C Project, San Luis Obispo, CA  
South Side Help Center, Chicago, IL  
Spears Foundation for Hepatitis C, Franklin, TN  
St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction, Bronx, NY  
St. Vincents HCV Support Group, Manhattan, NY  
Status C Unknown, Medford, NY  
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma, WA  
Test Positive Aware Network, Chicago, IL  
The AIDS Institute, Washington, DC  
The Center for Health Improvement (CHI), Sacramento, CA  
The Community Access National Network (CANN), Washington, DC  
Treatment Action Group (TAG), New York, NY  
UHAP / Upstate New York Hepatitis C Awareness Project, Delancey, NY  
Urban Health Epidemiology Program, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine, Brooklyn, New York  
Village Care of New York, New York, NY  
Visionary Health Concepts, Gardiner, NY  
Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders (VOCAL), Brooklyn, NY  
Washington Heights CORNER Project, New York, NY  
Wilson Resource Center, Arnolds Park, IA

cc: Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee Members

*This document was prepared by the Hepatitis C Appropriations Partnership (HCAP). HCAP was formed in June 2004 as a coalition that represents hepatitis community-based organizations, public health officials, health providers, national HIV and hepatitis organizations, and diagnostic and pharmaceutical companies. We work with policy makers and public health officials to increase federal leadership and support for viral hepatitis prevention, testing, education, research, medical management and treatment. For more information, please contact Colin Schwartz at 202.434.8005 or [cschwartz@NASTAD.org](mailto:cschwartz@NASTAD.org).*

