



September 20, 2019

Carolyn Wester, MD, MPH
Director, Division of Viral Hepatitis
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA

Re: 2017 Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report

Dear Dr. Wester,

On behalf of organizations working to eliminate hepatitis B in the United States, we are writing in response to the 2017 CDC Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report. We recognize there is extremely limited federal funding to support viral hepatitis surveillance and prevention efforts and will use this opportunity to share report findings with policymakers to call for increased federal resources. We look forward to working with CDC to address trends in hepatitis B infections highlighted in the 2017 report.

Acute Hepatitis B Surveillance

The rise in acute hepatitis B infections in adults as a consequence of injection drug use underscores the need to prioritize and increase adult hepatitis B vaccination coverage. This presents an opportunity to reassess the hepatitis B vaccine recommendations for adults and develop communications materials to promote public and provider awareness.

Chronic Hepatitis B Surveillance

While national surveillance for acute viral hepatitis infections illustrates a clear burden and provides direction for investment and public health intervention, the publication of chronic viral hepatitis surveillance data does the opposite. We are concerned that the number of newly reported cases of confirmed chronic hepatitis B cases (Table 3.3) does not demonstrate the true burden of chronic hepatitis B in the United States, and negatively impacts community-based efforts and resources dedicated to eliminating hepatitis B. We are interested in learning more about the processes for reporting chronic viral hepatitis surveillance data.

- Based on community-based hepatitis B testing programs and primary care testing, we know there are new chronic hepatitis B infections found in some states. But, for example, in 2017, why were zero cases reported from California and Hawaii?

- How does the CDC supplemental funding for expanded chronic viral hepatitis surveillance support state infrastructure?

Hepatitis B: Mortality

The data showed significant disparities in hepatitis B-related mortality rates among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Non-Hispanic Blacks. It is critical that we improve efforts to reverse this trend, increase testing, and address treatment barriers.

We appreciate your leadership and continued work by the CDC to shed light on the viral hepatitis epidemics. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss opportunities to strengthen viral hepatitis surveillance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Caballero, MPH
Co-Chair, Hep B United
Executive Director, AAPCHO

Chari Cohen, DrPH, MPH
Co-Chair, Hep B United
Senior Vice President, Hepatitis B Foundation

Kate Moraras, MPH
Director, Hep B United
Senior Program Director, Hepatitis B Foundation

Hep B United Coalition Members:

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, Oakland, CA
Asian American Health Coalition (HOPE Clinic), Houston, TX
Asian American Community Services, Upper Arlington, OH
Asian Center – Southeast Michigan, Grand Rapids, MI
Asian Health Coalition, Chicago, IL
Asian Pacific American Medical Students Association, Huntington Beach, CA
Asian Pacific Community in Action, Phoenix, AZ
Asian Pacific Liver Center at St. Vincent Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA
Asian Pacific Health Foundation, San Diego, CA
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy, and Leadership, Oakland, CA
Asian Services in Action, Inc., Cleveland, OH
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Atlanta, GA
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, New York, NY
Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition, Aurora, CO
Colorado Viral Hepatitis Task Force, Denver, CO
Community Welfare Services of Metro Detroit, Hamtramck, MI

Dallas-Fort Worth Hepatitis B Free Project, Dallas, TX
Hep B Free Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV
Hep B Free Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Hep B United Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Hep B United Twin Cities (Lao Assistance Center of MN), Minneapolis, MN
Hep Free Hawaii, Honolulu, HI
HepAware Coalition, Dover, DE
Hepatitis B Coalition of Washington State (International Community Health Services), Seattle
WA
Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington DC, Washington, DC Metro Area
Hepatitis Education Project, Seattle, WA
Immunization Action Coalition, Saint Paul, MN
Liver Health Connection, Denver, CO
Mercy Housing and Human Development, Gulfport, MS
Midwest Asian Health Association, Chicago, IL
National Center for Reducing Asian American Cancer Health Disparities, Sacramento, CA
National Task Force on Hepatitis B
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, Washington, DC
North East Medical Services, San Francisco, CA
New Jersey Hepatitis B Coalition / Center for Asian Health at Saint Barnabas Medical Center,
Livingston, NJ
New York City Hepatitis B Coalition, New York, NY
New York University Center for the Study of Asian American Health, New York, NY
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition, Columbus, OH
San Francisco Hep B Free – Bay Area, San Francisco, CA
Team HBV, Palo Alto, CA
Vietnamese American Cancer Foundation, Fountain Valley, CA