

the Change

2025 Year in Review

Thank You!

As we reflect on 2025, it's clear that the year brought significant challenges - both for our work and, for many of us, personally. Numerous shifts in the federal landscape changed our paths forward this year and required us to adapt quickly. Yet through these difficulties, one constant remained: the strength and dedication of our community.

Thank you to all of our advocates for your tireless efforts, unwavering support, and steadfast commitment to protecting public health. Your advocacy, collaboration, and resilience have not only inspired us but have also demonstrated the power of a united community.

Happy New Year!
The Hep B United Advocacy Team
Frank, Michaela, and Michelle

Advocacy on the Hill

Annual Appropriations

The Hepatitis B Foundation mobilized advocates nationwide to urge their members of Congress to increase federal funding for hepatitis B and liver cancer in the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) budget. While FY 2026 appropriations bill has not yet been signed into law, the Senate recommends maintaining viral hepatitis funding at the CDC at \$43 million, while the House proposes a \$10 million increase despite significant public health cuts being considered by both chambers.

Virtual Hill Day

Hep B United hosted a virtual advocacy day on April 30th – recognized annually as Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day – for partners from across the country to meet with their Congress members. Nearly 50 advocates attended 27 meetings representing 12 states. Advocates urged Congress to: increase funding for viral hepatitis programs at the CDC for expanded surveillance and prevention programs, including testing and linkage to care initiatives; fully fund the CDC's program to eliminate opioid-related infectious diseases; and ask HHS to reverse the viral hepatitis lab closure.

These meetings allowed storytellers, public health officials, and advocates to highlight essential investments needed to educate about, protect against, and eliminate hepatitis B. These meetings also brought attention to the negative impacts Congress's actions have had on public health and on combating hepatitis B in the U.S.

A Year of Defending the Birth Dose

In 2025, the public health community united to defend the essential role of the long-standing hepatitis B birth dose - a vaccine that has prevented millions of infections worldwide.

Through collaborations with leading medical and public health institutions such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the [Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#), the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, the American Liver Foundation, and the Global Liver Institute, the Foundation amplified understanding of the vaccine's safety and importance among broad national audiences.

The Foundation played a pivotal role in advancing awareness of the benefits of the hepatitis B birth dose through targeted outreach, multiple webinars, written and oral public comments, and the launch of a [new media toolkit](#). Throughout the year, the Foundation and its advocates also provided critical insights and evidence-based information on the birth dose and the ACIP vote to more than 35 national and international [media outlets](#) such as [The New York Times](#), [NBC News](#), and [ABC News](#). Additionally, our #justB storytellers illuminated the voices of those with lived experience, bringing their real-world perspectives into the national conversation.

"For more than forty years, the hepatitis B vaccine has been thoroughly studied and consistently proven to prevent hepatitis B and liver cancer for infants, children, and adults. In the sheer number of lives saved, the vaccine has been one of the greatest public health achievements in the past 100 years."

In addition to our education efforts, our congressional engagement strategy in 2025 focused on elevating community concerns regarding the potential removal of universal hepatitis B birth dose recommendations. We sent formal letters to CDC leadership, including then-Director Susan Monarez, Acting Director Jim O'Neill, and then-ACIP Chair Martin Kulldorff, underscoring the need to preserve birth dose protections. In partnership with the Congressional Hepatitis Caucus, we contributed to a letter to Secretary Kennedy and worked closely with Representatives Nikema Williams and Kim Schrier to reinforce the public health imperative of hepatitis B vaccination. We also submitted targeted questions during Secretary Robert F. Kennedy's confirmation hearings about the hepatitis B vaccine, ensuring that Congress understood the urgency and public concern surrounding this issue.

HBF
Statement



HBU
Statement



Amplifying Lived Experience for Advocacy

Media Advocacy for the ACIP Meetings

In the months leading up to the restructured ACIP meeting and vote, Hepatitis B Foundation storytellers played a critical role in elevating the urgency of strong hepatitis B vaccination policies. As national conversations intensified around vaccine recommendations, storytellers helped ensure that lived experience remained central to the public narrative.

During this period, the Foundation received an unprecedented influx of media requests from major outlets, including [CNN](#), [BBC](#), [NPR](#), and [New York Times](#), seeking patient voices to contextualize the potential real-world consequences of weakened vaccine guidance. Storytellers stepped forward with remarkable courage and clarity, sharing personal experiences that underscore what is at stake when access to prevention is compromised. Collectively, their advocacy ensured that patient perspectives were visible, humanized, and impossible to ignore during a pivotal moment for hepatitis B prevention policy.



[HBF #justB storyteller John featured in CNN's reporting of the ACIP changes](#)

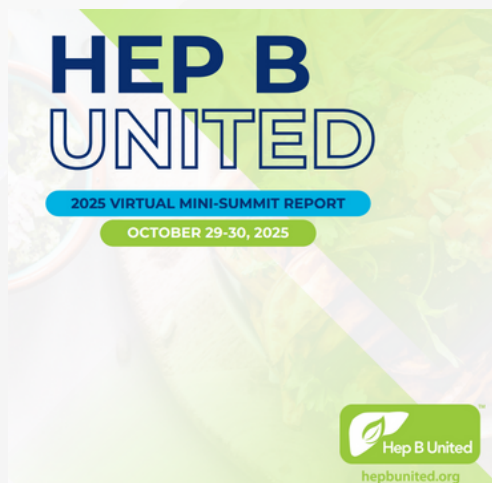
Storytellers in Action Program

In January 2025, the Hepatitis B Foundation officially launched [Storytellers in Action \(SiA\)](#), a structured advocacy training and mentorship program designed to equip storytellers with the skills, confidence, and tools to advocate for themselves and their communities. The program's curriculum was thoughtfully created by [Wendy Lo](#), who drew from her own experience and expertise as an advocate to design courses tailored specifically for storytellers. Her approach ensures that each session speaks to the heart of the advocacy journey — empowering storytellers to build confidence, strengthen their voices, and take meaningful action. The inaugural pilot cohort brought together engaged storytellers who were ready to move from sharing lived experience to taking on more active advocacy roles.

The SiA curriculum focuses on transforming personal stories into strategic advocacy tools. Participants received training on topics such as crafting stories for specific audiences, understanding policy and, engaging with media, addressing stigma with compassion, and navigating advocacy spaces with confidence. The program also emphasizes ethical storytelling, self-care, and using lived experience responsibly and sustainably. Building on the success and strong engagement of the pilot cohort, a second SiA cohort was launched in Fall 2025. Together, these cohorts reflect the Foundation's continued investment in developing patient leaders who are not only willing to speak out, but are equipped to create lasting impact through informed, effective advocacy.



Reuniting at the Hep B United Mini-Summit



[Read the report here.](#)

In October, Hep B United hosted a two-day virtual mini-summit with the theme “Family Potluck,” where we brought culture and community together to exchange successes, challenges, and wisdom while celebrating the diversity and richness of the communities we serve. The summit drew nearly 200 people and highlighted more than 30 speakers who touched on topics ranging from increasing screening and vaccination to how to advocate through storytelling. The Policy Updates session at the summit featured discussions and presentations on policies affecting hepatitis B, including the Budget Reconciliation Act, health access concerns, and public charge impacts. The session ended with a call to action for attendees to contact their representatives, request district meetings, and use media attention and data to amplify impact.

B the Change Action Center

50+

Congressional
Hill Visits



20

Public & oral
comments
submitted



800+

Emails sent to
congress members
through mass
outreach campaigns



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Join **B the Change** for advocacy updates and action alerts.

Questions? Contact us at advocate@hepb.org.