



Executive Summary

Hepatitis B disease is one of the greatest failures of the healthcare system, but with already existing resources, Federal leadership and a limited amount of federal funding can help eliminate Hep B disease, create new jobs and empower the Asian/Pacific Islander community.

Recommendations include: (1) Presidential recognition of hepatitis B disease, (2) National coordinator staff position for viral hepatitis at Department of Health and Human Services, (3) Develop a national plan for prevention and control (Congressman Honda and Dent, and Senator Feinstein have initiated first steps).

Hepatitis B Disease is greatest healthcare treatment gap

More people are infected with the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) but not on treatment than any other disease in the world. There are 300 – 400 million people infected with HBV worldwide. Chronic hepatitis B infections cause 80% of all primary liver cancer worldwide. There are up to 2 million chronically infected HBV American citizens; less than 5% of these Americans are on treatment medications.

Hepatitis B Disease opportunities for healthcare reform and job creation

HBV liver disease and cancer can be completely prevented either through vaccinations or with treatment medications. Government healthcare plans are often the biggest payers of liver transplants. These costs can be saved with a coordinated Hepatitis B campaign featuring public awareness and medical education with participation from community stakeholders and health industry companies and entities. American pharmaceutical companies produce both a vaccine that prevents HBV infection, and a variety of treatment medications. Many leading hospitals on both East and West coasts have international expertise on hepatitis B and liver disease.

Already major pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and community organizations have increased workforce to meet this huge unmet healthcare need. Thousands of job opportunities can be created in the short term that would cut healthcare costs drastically in the long term by eliminating costly cancer treatments and liver transplants.

Hepatitis B Disease is greatest health disparity for Asian/Pacific Islanders

Asian and Pacific Islanders are 100 times more likely to have chronic HBV infection than Caucasians. One out of every 10 Asian and Pacific Islanders has chronic hepatitis B. Hep B disease and liver cancer are greatest health disparity between Asians and white Americans. The incidence of liver cancer in Asians is the highest of any racial/ethnic group. Liver cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in Asian men.

Hepatitis B is biggest community organizing issue for Asian/Pacific Islanders

The largest community organizing ever undertaken for Asian/Pacific Islanders Americans is happening around prevention and treatment campaigns for hepatitis B disease. In California, the San Francisco Hep B campaign has over 150 community group in collaboration. Other municipalities (New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Austin, TX; Chicago, Ill; Rockville Maryland; Los Angeles, San Mateo, Santa Clara County California; and others) are replicating this community-based model that both empowers the APIA community, and develops momentum for healthcare reform.

Hepatitis B organizing efforts are local in focus, but national in scope. The Centers for Disease Control and the Office of Minority Health issued new national recommendations for hepatitis B in 2008.