



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate Moraras
kate.moraras@hepb.org
(703) 623-4364

Hep B United National Coalition Marks World Hepatitis Day with Call for a Cure and the Elimination of Hepatitis B

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 2017) – Hep B United, a national coalition established by the Hepatitis B Foundation and the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) to address the silent epidemic of hepatitis B, will host its fifth annual summit in Washington, D.C., July 26 to 28, to promote screening and prevention strategies and advocate for a cure to further its mission to eliminate hepatitis B in the United States.

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus and is the world’s most common, serious liver infection. It is also the deadliest vaccine-preventable disease, with nearly 1 million people dying each year from hepatitis B. In the United States, an estimated 2 million Americans are chronically infected with hepatitis B, yet most do not know it. Without early diagnosis and intervention, one in four people living with hepatitis B will die prematurely from liver failure or liver cancer

“Working together, we can eliminate hepatitis B in the U.S., but it will mean prioritizing hepatitis B as an urgent public health problem,” said Chari Cohen, DrPH, MPH, deputy executive director of the Hepatitis B Foundation and Hep B United co-chair. “Now is the time to prioritize and accelerate research so that we can find a cure for hepatitis B and effectively treat liver cancer.”

The Hep B United summit is the largest convening of hepatitis B leaders from community coalitions, national nonprofit organizations, individuals and family members affected by hepatitis B, and public health agencies in the United States. The summit is part of world-wide events to mark World Hepatitis Day, observed each year on July 28. Meeting sessions will focus on building capacity and sustaining local hepatitis B coalitions, increasing public awareness about hepatitis B through storytelling, and discussing the “Know Hepatitis B” campaign, which was developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and co-branded with Hep B United.

The summit will include visits to Capitol Hill, as leaders in the fight against hepatitis B tell federal legislators the critical need for resources to support research for hepatitis B and liver cancer, education, screening and treatment programs. The coalition will also host a Congressional reception on July 26 highlighting the Hepatitis B Foundation’s new campaign, “#justB: Real People Sharing Their Stories of Hepatitis B.” The #justB Storytelling Campaign tells the personal stories of people affected by hepatitis B to increase public awareness.

“This Summit illustrates our ongoing commitment to reducing disparities in Asian American, Pacific Islander and other communities disproportionately impacted by this preventable and treatable disease,” said Jeffrey Caballero, MPH, AAPCHO executive director and Hep B United co-chair. “In continuing to work together to improve the coordination of activities both at the local and national level, we are influencing real change to combat this hidden epidemic and taking steps toward ending the burden of viral hepatitis on all communities.”

Hep B United brings together more than 30 community coalition members across the country located in 27 cities, 17 states, and Washington, D.C. The coalition focuses its work primarily in the disproportionately impacted Asian American and Pacific Islander communities (AAPI). AAPIs make up 50% of the hepatitis B burden in the U.S., and have liver cancer rates that are up to 13 times higher than Caucasian populations.

During the summit, Hep B United and its CDC partners will present five community leaders with the 2017 Hep B Champion Awards in recognition of their collaborative and successful initiatives to address hepatitis B in their communities:

Vivian Huang, MD, MPH, the Director of Adult Immunization and Emergency Preparedness for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the medical director for the NYC Department of Health Immunization Clinic is recognized for her commitment to reducing the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases locally and globally including hepatitis B and liver cancer. Dr. Huang is a strong, tireless advocate for hepatitis B prevention, education, and treatment and health equity through health department engagement.

Hong Liu, PhD, the Executive Director of the Midwest Asian Health Association in Chicago, Illinois, is recognized for her innovative approaches to educating the public on hepatitis B and her willingness to share her best practices and experiences with others working in the field. This year, Dr. Liu’s leadership has led her organization to educating over 1,337 individuals in Chicago’s Chinatown district and screening close to 300 individuals for hepatitis B.

The National Task Force on Hepatitis B for AAPI, is a national organization that brings together scientists, health professionals, non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens in a concerted effort to eliminate the transmission of hepatitis B and to decrease health disparities among those chronically infected. The Task Force is recognized for increasing physicians’ awareness about hepatitis B and launching a new health care provider program, bringing together public health and health care professionals in regional meetings around the country. ***The Health Education for Liver Providers (H.E.L.P.) Training Program*** is designed to provide health care providers and their medical team core medical knowledge of hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Cathy Phan, the Health Initiatives Project Manager at HOPE Clinic in Houston, Texas, is recognized for her dedication to reducing health disparities, advocating for access to health care and health equity for underserved populations. Cathy brings unique perspectives, best practices and creative, innovative ideas from the local community clinics to the national level.

Dan-Tam Phan-Hoang, MSc., is program manager of HBI-Minnesota, a Minneapolis, Minnesota-based non-profit that she helped start in 2015. Dan-Tam is recognized for her leadership in Minneapolis, building strong collaborations with community leaders, healthcare providers, funders, and government agencies to address hepatitis B throughout the state and successfully establishing a hepatitis B outreach and prevention program for high-risk communities in the Twin Cities.

About Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B is the world’s most common serious liver infection and the primary cause of liver cancer, which is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the world. Two billion people (1 in 3) have

been infected with the hepatitis B virus, more than 240 million are chronically infected, and almost 1 million people die each year from hepatitis B-related liver failure and liver cancer. In the U.S., one in 20 Americans has been infected with hepatitis B, and an estimated 2 million are chronically infected. The hepatitis B virus is transmitted through blood, unprotected sex, unsterile needles, and from an infected mother to her newborn during delivery. Although hepatitis B is preventable and treatable, there is still no complete cure for this deadly liver infection.

About Hep B United: Hep B United is a national coalition established by the Hepatitis B Foundation and the Association of Asian and Pacific Community Health Organizations to address the public health challenge of hepatitis B by increasing awareness, screening, vaccination and linkage to care for all Americans, with a particular focus on Asian-American and Pacific Islander populations that are disproportionately impacted. To learn more, visit www.hepbunited.org.

About the Hepatitis B Foundation: The Hepatitis B Foundation is the nation's leading nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. To learn more, visit www.hepb.org, read our blog at hepb.org/blog, follow us on Twitter [@HepBFoundation](https://twitter.com/HepBFoundation), find us on Facebook at facebook.com/hepbfoundation or call 215-489-4900.

About the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organization: The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organization (AAPCHO) is a national association of 35 community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration, and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders in the United States. To learn more, visit www.aapcho.org.

###