

January 21, 2009

The Honorable Arlen Specter
711 Hart Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we request your support for increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) in the Senate stimulus package. Increased funding for DVH will make a significant impact in reducing the morbidity and mortality from chronic viral hepatitis, an investment that would not only prevent viral hepatitis infections, but stimulate the economy by creating much needed jobs.

We also want to thank you for your longstanding commitment to maintaining the health of our nation by vigorously supporting federal funding of our nation's public health and research agencies. Through your leadership, CDC is poised to turn the tide against chronic viral hepatitis in the United States but can not respond effectively without additional funding.

Specifically, we are seeking the following hepatitis-specific funding:

- \$53 million to improve the detection of viral hepatitis by creating a complete and consistent national surveillance system;
- \$113 million to reduce illness and death from chronic viral hepatitis by building the capacity of state and local health departments to provide counseling, testing, education, case management, public awareness, and professional education;
- \$66.6 million to eliminate hepatitis B transmission among adults in the U.S. by providing vaccines to high risk adults and the infrastructure necessary for vaccine delivery; and
- \$26.4 million to prevent hepatitis B transmission and disease among infected pregnant women and their infants by creating a comprehensive case management program to vaccinate and monitor exposed infants, referring infected mothers for appropriate care, and screening and vaccinating family members.

Up to 5-6 million Americans are infected with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV), which are the leading causes of primary liver cancer -- the fastest growing cancer in incidence in the U.S. Each year, 10,000 Americans die prematurely from end-stage liver disease or liver cancer due to chronic viral hepatitis infections. Without an increase in funding to support prevention and surveillance capacity, chronic viral hepatitis will exact an unacceptably high burden of disease, death, and associated costs on the American public. Immediate action will avert this result.

We strongly support the need to invest in CDC capacity to win the battle against chronic viral hepatitis, which will ultimately lower health care costs and most important, improve

the health and longevity of our citizens. Should you have questions, please contact Joan Block at 215.489.4900 or joan@hepb.org.

AIDS Action Baltimore

AIDS Treatment Data Network, NY

After Hours Project, Inc., Brooklyn, NY

American Association for the Study of Liver Disease

American Cancer Society, Eastern Division, Asian Initiatives

American Liver Foundation

Association of Asian and Pacific Community Health Organizations

Asian American Health Coalition of Greater Houston

Asian American Hepatitis B Project

Asian Health Coalition of Illinois

Asian Pacific Health Center San Diego, CA

Asian Pacific Health Care Venture

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Liver Center at Stanford University

B Free CEED: National Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Hepatitis B
Disparities, NY, NY

California Hepatitis Alliance

Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc., Vancouver, WA

Education for Healthy Choices, Sacramento, CA

Foundation for Healthy Living, Latham, NY

FROST'D (The Foundation for Research on Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Inc), NY

HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska

HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention Program, Harm Reduction Center of Southern
Oregon

HIVictorious, Inc., Madison, WI

Harlem United Community AIDS Center

HealthReach Harm Reduction and The Next Step Needle Exchange

H.E.A.L.S. of South Georgia

Hepatitis B Foundation, PA

Hepatitis B Initiative of Boston
Hepatitis C Association, New Jersey
Hepatitis C Support Project/ HCV Advocate, San Francisco, CA
Hepatitis Education Project, Seattle, WA
Hepatitis Foundation International, MD
Hep C Connection, Denver, CO
hepCmeditations project, Seattle, WA
Hep Help of New Jersey Alliance, Inc
Hispanic Health Network of Minnesota
HowardCenter Safe Recovery, Burlington, VT
Immunization Action Coalition
International Foundation for Alternative Research in AIDS, Portland, OR
LiverHope, Minnetonka, MN
Local Area Support for Hepatitis, Inc (LASH), Redding, CA
The Los Angeles County API Hepatitis B Coalition
Los Angeles County Hepatitis B Coalition
Maryland Hepatitis C Action, Annapolis, MD
Maryland Viral Hepatitis Task Force, Baltimore, MD
Mendocino County AIDS Volunteer Network, Ukiah, CA
Mo Hepatitis C Alliance, Columbia, MO
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association of People with AIDS
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Minority AIDS Council
National Task Force on Hepatitis B: Focus on Asians and Pacific Islanders
New Mexico Hepatitis C Alliance
New York Harm Reduction Educators' Inc
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition, San Francisco, CA
NYU Medical Center Hepatitis C Support Group
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition
Ohio Inner-City Support for Hepatitis C, Cleveland, OH
Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program of Santa Clara County, California

Positive Union Resource Development Center
Project Inform, San Francisco, CA
S.F. B Free, San Francisco, CA
Status C Unknown, New York
STOP Hep Task Force, Sacramento, CA
The Asian Health Coalition of Illinois
The Georgia Doty Health Education Fund, Illinois
TII CANN - Title II Community AIDS National Network, Washington, D.C.
Treatment Action Group, NY, NY
University of California, Davis, Cancer Center, Sacramento, CA
Vietnamese Community Health Initiative (VCHI), NY, NY
Vietnamese Community Health Promotion Project, San Francisco
Visionary Health Concepts, Gardiner, New York
Wilson Resource Center (WRC), Arnolds Park, Iowa
Women with Disabilities Health Equity Coalition, Portland, Or

List of individual signers

Mindy O'Neill

Gary Kininmonth

Terry Poling

Chad Hahn

Sheila Kramer

Aletha Thomas

Diana Schillmaier

Henry Dehaan

Karen Armstrong

James Picard

Jim Tuscany

Kathy Rojas

Neil Rojas

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Mellisa A. Wisniewski

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