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*Jade Ribbon Campaigns Launches in the Korean Community to fight Hepatitis B and Liver Cancer in the Korean and Korean American Communities*

STANFORD, Calif. – One in ten Korean Americans is afflicted with a disease that is 50-100 times as infectious as AIDS and cirrhosis is the leading cause of death for Korean males aged 30-50. This disease that affects some 6 million Koreans worldwide, hepatitis B is completely preventable with a simple and safe vaccination.

Because the disease is largely asymptomatic until after child-bearing age, it has succeeded in being handed down from generation to generation among Koreans. Even in the early stages of liver cancer, people can lack symptoms. However by the time symptoms appear, much of the damage has already been done and death often follows. Education is our greatest weapon to stop this disease in its tracks.

This silent epidemic is making its way through the Korean community at an astounding rate. Hepatitis B is particularly tragic because its spread is something that we can stop simply by outreach and education. The Asian Liver Center at Stanford University Medical Center is fighting to stop the spread of this deadly disease through the launch of its Jade Ribbon Campaign, an effort to spread awareness about hepatitis B and liver cancer, in the Korean community.

Hepatitis B is a blood-borne virus that afflicts the liver and can cause severe liver scarring (cirrhosis) and/or liver cancer. "Hepatitis B is endemic in Asian countries where up to 20 percent of the population are hepatitis B carriers," Dr. Samuel So, director and founder of the Asian Liver Center, stated. 12% of Koreans have chronic hepatitis B and one in four of those infected will eventually die from liver cancer or cirrhosis directly resulting from hepatitis B.

Contrary to common misconceptions, Koreans generally contract hepatitis B from their mothers at birth, not from causes like intravenous drug use or unprotected sex. Furthermore, it cannot be transmitted through casual contact but rather through close intimate contact such as sharing toothbrushes and razor blades. For many immigrants who hold stigmas about this disease, it is also important to educate them about what is fact and what is fiction.

Even doctors often are not fully aware of the extreme health risk to Koreans. American physicians are often unacquainted with the specific risk to the Korean population because the incidence in the overall American population is so low 20 times lower than in Koreans.

The mission of the Jade Ribbon Campaign is to increase awareness about hepatitis B and liver cancer and to urge Koreans to:

\* Get Tested for Hepatitis B. Koreans should specifically ask their doctors for the hepatitis B surface antigen (HbsAg) test.

\*Get Vaccinated against hepatitis B. Individuals who test negative for the HBsAg should get vaccinated against hepatitis B.

\*Get Screened for Liver Cancer. Those who test positive for the surface antigen should closely monitor their liver function and screen for liver cancer every 6 months after age 30.

The Asian Liver Center has launched this campaign in conjunction with Korean actor Lee Jae Ryong, from the popular Korean television drama *Sang Do*, to spread the message about hepatitis B to the Korean community. A public service announcement filmed in Seoul, Korea with Lee will be airing on Korean television and radio stations. The PSA will be accompanied by the distribution of print advertisements and brochures relating to Asians and hepatitis B in Northern and Southern California in hopes of alerting and informing the Korean community of the dangers of hepatitis B.

Often ignored in the United States, hepatitis B is slowly taking lives in the Korean community and Asian American population at large. The Asian Liver Center asks for your help in joining the Jade Ribbon Campaign.

For information about the Jade Ribbon campaign, call the campaign's hotline at (650) 72-LIVER or visit the Asian Liver Center Web site at <http://liver.stanford.edu>.