

For Immediate Release
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제이드 리본 캠페인 Aims B 형 간염 Awareness Efforts to the 한국어 공동 사회

STANFORD, Calif.- In order to spread awareness about the hepatitis B virus, a silent killer in the Korean community, 스탠포드대학내 아시안 간 센터, home of the Jade Ribbon Campaign, is offering free hepatitis B screenings at 한미봉사회 in San Jose on October 18, 2003, from 11am-4pm. This free screening provides the B 형 간염 표면 항원 (HBsAg), which determines whether or not you are infected with hepatitis B (HBV).

Spokesman for the Asian Liver Center and two-time liver transplant survivor, Sean Lee now urges members of the community not only to get informed regarding hepatitis B and liver cancer, but to take immediate action to protect themselves from HBV. "We need to realize that this virus doesn't care if you are old or young. It doesn't care if you are a rich man or a poor man. It just attacks," says Mr. Lee.

In 1988, Mr. Lee discovered that he himself had joined the ranks of the over 400 million people across the globe who are carriers of the hepatitis B virus (HBV), a virus that is asymptomatic and deadly if left undiagnosed and untreated. Worldwide, 100 million people die each year from liver failure or cancer caused by hepatitis B. When broken down, the statistics become even more staggering-- Hepatitis B takes a life every thirty seconds. Most are Asian.

According to Dr. Samuel So, Director of the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University, "While uncommon in the general population, up to one in twelve Koreans is a chronic carrier of the virus. Without monitoring or treatment, one in four will die from cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer. Liver cancer is the 4th leading cause of death from cancer among Korean men."

Because of its mode of transmission, hepatitis B can affect entire families. HBV is transmitted by blood; most Asians and Pacific Islanders become infected as infants or as young children. Transmission usually occurs from a mother to her child during the birthing process, or during early childhood during contact with infected individuals through open wounds. Had Mr. Lee been advised of this, he would have made sure that his brother was immediately screened for HBV.

Sadly, Mr. Lee's brother did not find out he was a carrier until he had already been diagnosed with liver cancer. Because hepatitis B is largely asymptomatic, many who believe that they are healthy are unaware that they are carriers. Diagnosed with inoperable liver cancer, Mr. Lee's brother passed away in 1999.

Mr. Lee himself, however, was fortunate to have been monitored and treated for hepatitis B. Today, Mr. Lee looks to be the picture of perfect health, continuing to lead an active and healthy life, carefully monitoring his health through frequent check-ups and intensive drug therapy.

More than ever, Mr. Lee has learned to enjoy and appreciate his full life, spending time with his wife and two children, sharpening his skills as a photographer, and participating in recreational activities. In July 2002, just over a year after his second liver transplant, Lee climbed Mt. Whitney, then tackling Mt. Shasta in August of that same year. This past May, Mr. Lee also completed the challenging Bay to Breakers 12K run in San Francisco with his ten-year old son.

In order to spread awareness about this silent killer, the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University launched the Jade Ribbon Campaign in May 2001. The message of the Jade Ribbon Campaign is to get informed, and for individuals to protect themselves and their loved ones. “The Korean community needs to know about this disease, they must take this matter very seriously, and they need to do something about it,” agrees Mr. Lee. “I hope that everyone will go out and take action against this disease.”

The Asian Liver Center at Stanford University is offering a free hepatitis B screening event to the Korean community on October 18, 2003, from 11am-4pm. This free screening provides the hepatitis B surface antigen test (HBsAg), which can determine whether or not you are infected with hepatitis B. Patients will also have the option of taking a panel of three comprehensive tests to find out their full hepatitis B history for a fee of \$45.

Health presentations will be scheduled throughout the day, accompanied by videos and a mini-health fair. Refreshments will also be provided at this event.

Drop ins are welcome, but scheduled appointments are recommended.

The screening will take place at Korean American Community Services, Inc., located at 1800 Fruitdale Ave. in San Jose, CA. To make an appointment, please call (650) 724-2923, or check the Asian Liver Center’s website at <http://liver.stanford.edu> for more information.