

Asian Liver Center Takes Fight Against Hep B Global

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As a SF Hep B Free Steering Committee Member, the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University has been doing an excellent job of educating the San Francisco Bay Area about hepatitis B.



In May 2001, the Asian Liver Center launched the Jade Ribbon Campaign to spread awareness about hepatitis B and liver cancer in the Asian community. Since then, the Jade Ribbon Campaign has spread across the country reaching Asian communities in San Diego, Arizona, New York and Hawai'i.

Now they are expanding their efforts to a global level, as they announced on Nov. 2 at the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Conference in San Francisco.

Together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization, they are launching the first-ever global hepatitis B initiative, the Asia and Pacific Alliance to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis (APAVH).

More than 350 million people worldwide are chronically infected with hepatitis B, the major cause of liver cancer. Many are unaware that they are infected and most of those infected do not have access to affordable treatment.

“APAVH aims to form broad-based sustainable partnerships to advocate and spearhead the development of comprehensive regional and national policies,” said Dr. Samuel So, founder of the Asian Liver Center. “It will also promote the implementation of WHO regional recommendations that will ultimately eliminate hepatitis B transmission and the resultant threat of liver cancer and liver disease.”

APAVH will create a sustainable coalition to eliminate the transmission of viral hepatitis and reduce the complications of chronic viral hepatitis. This mission will be accomplished through advocacy, education, vaccination and treatment and by sharing best practices and the development of regional and country-specific goals.

Global elimination of hepatitis B infection is possible through vaccination and prevention of blood-borne transmission. Deaths can be avoided through timely antiviral drug treatment, and

discrimination can be eliminated through education, according to Alena Groopman, the Asian Liver Center's global community health coordinator.

"The Asian Liver Center is committed to eradicating hepatitis B in the San Francisco area and the SF Hep B Free campaign serves as an effective, replicable model to other Bay Area and California cities and counties," said Groopman.