

Dear representative,

On behalf of hepatitis B patients and others silently suffering with chronic viral hepatitis, I am writing to urge you to support an increase in the funding level for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Viral Hepatitis, to a total of \$50 million in the FY2011 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. This funding increase is supported by the new Institute of Medicine Report, "Hepatitis and Liver Cancer," please see the report summary below.

In order to meet the needs of the six million US residents affected by hepatitis B and C, the CDC must receive additional funding to develop robust public health programs. A funding level of \$50 million is the first step in building a comprehensive viral hepatitis program at the CDC that will include education, testing, vaccination, surveillance and referral to care. In addition, we ask for your support for greater funding of viral hepatitis activity at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct research into treatments that will eliminate hepatitis B, hepatitis C and liver cancer. Liver cancer, largely caused by chronic viral hepatitis, is the 5th leading cause of cancer and the only type of cancer that is on the rise. Liver cancer is one of the most deadly forms of cancer and more research is needed at the NIH to develop lifesaving treatments.

Hepatitis and Liver Cancer: A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C. Up to 5.3 million people—2 percent of the U.S. population—are living with chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C. These diseases are more common than HIV/AIDS in the U.S. Yet, because hepatitis B and hepatitis C often present no symptoms, most people who have them are unaware until they develop liver cancer or liver disease many years later.

A new IOM study finds that these diseases are not widely recognized as serious public health problems, and as a result, that viral hepatitis prevention, control, and surveillance programs have inadequate resources. The report concludes that the current approach to the prevention and control of chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C is not working. As a remedy, the IOM recommends increased knowledge and awareness about chronic viral hepatitis among health care providers, social service providers, and the public; improved surveillance for hepatitis B and hepatitis C; and better integration of viral hepatitis services.

For the complete report go to:

<http://www.livercancerfree.org/docs/IOMHepatitisandLiverCancerReport.pdf>

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address: