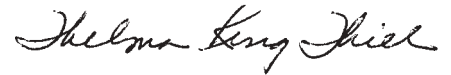


Hepatitis Alert

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“Prevention can save lives today.”



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LIVER LADY ENERGIZES PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY TO ATTACK HEPATITIS C

Thelma King Thiel, HFI's CEO was invited by the Blair County Healthy Community Partnership in Altoona, Pennsylvania to kick off a major campaign to attack an alarming increase in hepatitis C infections. Blair County reported 215 new cases of the HCV in 2003 that coincided with the burgeoning problem of heroin use among substance abusers.

County officials and community leaders asked the assistance of “The Liver Lady” to mobilize the community to promote liver wellness as an effective approach to prevent the spread of hepatitis and bring this critical problem under control. Thiel's unique and effective communication techniques have achieved success in preventing viral hepatitis and substance abuse . . . and motivating individuals to assess their own risk of exposure and to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors. She encouraged healthcare providers to take advantage of teachable moments to educate young and old alike. “There are missed opportunities to educate individuals who participate in high risk behaviors who attend STD clinics, juvenile detention centers, corrections facilities, rehabilitation centers, and other medical clinics,” Thiel reported. Ready made, effective and memorable educational materials and videos developed by HFI carry consistent lifesaving messages. The objective of this approach is to motivate individuals to assess their own risk behaviors and to take responsibility for their own healthcare by avoiding liver damaging activities.

“take advantage of teachable moments”

“We have to help those who are currently substance abusers to avoid sharing needles that can spread hepatitis and HIV.” She added, “We must also educate school children about the importance of the liver, their internal power plant, and encourage them to avoid behaviors that can cause it to shut down.” Viruses, drugs and alcohol attack and kill liver cells that serve as the employees in the body's personal power plant. This assault occurs without warning until the damage is far advanced leading to cirrhosis and even cancer. Hepatitis infections can go undetected for 20 or more years thereby contributing to the spread of these insidious viruses.

Four Blair County hospitals, Altoona, Bon Secours, Nason and Tyrone, have agreed to hold HCV screening programs over the next few months. Anyone who has used IV drugs, snorted cocaine, had a blood transfusion or used other blood products before 1992, or had a tattoo or body piercing possibly with contaminated instruments should ask to be tested. Those who are HCV infected should avoid drinking alcohol as it speeds the damage to the liver.

Hepatitis C is a preventable disease. attacking the problem through a coordinated effort can save lives and reduce the incidence of hepatitis. Education is essential to promoting prevention. Effective teaching tools are available for children, adolescents, parents, healthcare providers, and those who participate in high risk behaviors.

For information about HFI's Train the Trainer Program on Liver Wellness and Prevention of Hepatitis and Substance Abuse, call 800-891-0707.

Liver Wellness Added to CSAP and ATTC Outreach Training

Over 150 substance abuse and HIV administrators and counselors, attendees at CSAP and ATTC Conferences, learned how important their own liver is to their health and wellbeing. “Our approach engages the listener to evaluate the importance of their own liver,” said Thelma King Thiel, a guest lecturer. “Memorable analogies they can relate to in their daily lives remain imbedded in their minds, enabling them to be more effective in encouraging their clients to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors.”

Sharon Boyd, BIS, Michigan Department of Community Health, an attendee reported, “This is the first time I actually thought about my liver. She made me want to change some of my negative habits to help my liver. Ms. Thiel also explained how important it is to know about the functions of your own liver and health before attempting to educate and outreach to at-risk populations.”

Quick and easy techniques and materials, including eleven upbeat videos in various languages and for all ages, are filling a tremendous void. Extensive surveys prove the success of HFI's Liver Wellness Train the Trainer programs in motivating individuals to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors.

Research Advances

NEW DRUGS INCREASE SURVIVAL OF LIVER TRANSPLANTS: A new combination of drugs reduced the rejection of the transplanted liver to 12% from previous rates as high as 45% after one year. The combination includes the drug, Basiliximab, an monoclonal antibody; tacrolimus, a standard anti-rejection agent and steroids. Tacrolimus is a drug that suppresses the immune system by inhibiting an enzyme, calcineurin, crucial to T-cell proliferation. This has the potential to change the standard of care for liver transplant recipients.

STUDY COMPARES PEGASYS TO LAMIVUDINE: A study reported in the New England Journal of medicine reported that hepatitis B patients receiving pegasys monotherapy had significantly higher rates of response than patients receiving lamivudine. Findings show that Pegasys can be administered for a finite period resulting in significant response rates.

NEW DATABASE PROVIDES ACCESS TO CLINICAL STUDY INFORMATION: A new website contains the results of all controlled clinical trails, both positive and negative, (mainly Phase III and IV studies). Established by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) it will help both patients and doctors obtain clinical trial information. www.clinicalstudyresults.org

HBV VACCINE NONRESPONSE DESCRIBED: CDC and the University of Los Andes, Venezuela researchers suggest that the overall inability of T-cells to be activated by the vaccine in 4 – 10 % of immunized subjects could be consistent with potential differences in antigen presentation.

FDA GRANTS FAST TRACK STATUS FOR RX FOR COINFECTION: Roche has been granted fast track status for its license application to market Pegasys in combination with Copegus for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C in patients coinfecting with HIV. Hepatitis C is one of the leading killers of people with HIV today. An estimated 30% of people in the US with HIV are coinfecting with HCV.

LIVER BIOPSY PREDICTS STAGE OF LIVER DAMAGE: V. G. Bain at the University of Alberta compared the findings available by clinical and laboratory data to actual biopsy to determine whether biopsy is required routinely. Despite knowledge of the clinical and laboratory investigations of patients with HV, they concluded that clinicians are unable to accurately predict the hepatic inflammatory grade and fibrotic state.

TRANSJUGULAR LIVER BIOPSY SAFE FOR HCV PATIENTS WITH BLEEDING DISORDERS: French investigators at Hospital Cochin, report that tranjugular liver biopsy in patients with hemophilia and other bleeding disorders appears to be safe and useful in HCV patients. They concluded that one-third of patients evaluated had minimal histological changes and could avoid systematic anti-HCV treatment.

ADVANCES MADE IN UNDERSTANDING SPONTANEOUS VIRAL CLEARANCE: A multicenter study, published in *Science*, 8/6/04, demonstrated that natural killer (NK) cells provide a central defense against HCV infection. Researchers identified a specific combination of genes in 1,000 patients that directly confers protection against HCV. The genes are killer cell immunoglobulin-like receptors and HLA class I genes. The study also suggested that the amount of virus the received is an important factor and that the more NK cells of the protective type that an individual has the more likely they are to clear HCV.

FUNDS LACKING TO PROTECT PRISONERS FROM HBV IN GEORGIA: The majority of inmates infected with hepatitis B in Georgia prisons got the virus while in prison. Vaccination have been recommended for a long time but not funded. Georgia officials believe about 75% of the states 45,000 inmates could benefit from the vaccine. They are concerned that infected inmates will spread the disease when they are released from prison.

80 YEAR OLD DONORS MAY COMPROMISE SURVIVAL OF LIVER GRAFT: A recent study at the University of Bologna, Italy, suggests the octogenarian liver can be used safely but a careful donor evaluation and a short cold ischemia are required to prevent additional risk factors. They found that hepatitis C recurrence is associated with a greater mortality in patients who received octogenarian grafts raising concerns whether to allocate these livers to HCV-positive recipients.

Visit HFI's website at www.HepatitisFoundation.org for updated information on viral hepatitis, educational programs and materials and current activities.

HFI Welcomes Carol Craig

We are pleased to report that Carol Craig, a nationally recognized patient advocate, has joined the staff of the Hepatitis Foundation International.

Carol's broad experience as a clinical research coordinator, case manager of hepatitis patients, and her passion for helping patients cope with their illness, will enhance HFI's efforts to respond to the many needs of patients and their care givers.

Renowned for her unique understanding of patient issues and those of healthcare providers, Carol has shared her enthusiasm and knowledge with counselors, nurses, medical assistants and patients across the nation. We look forward to having her share her many talents with us at HFI.

New Surveys On Teen Sex

A recent study conducted by the Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) reveals that 84% of parents do not believe their teen is sexually active. When coupled with the results from a CDC study that reports nearly half of all 9th – 12th graders have had sex, it becomes obvious that parents are out of touch, and perhaps even in denial about their children's sexual activities.

SAM is launching a national campaign to help educate parents on how to best protect their teens against various health risks, including hepatitis B, a disease that can be 100 times more contagious than HIV. Because infant vaccination for hepatitis B began in 1991, SAM recommends having all teens born prior to 1991 vaccinated against hepatitis B. Regular dialogue between parents and their teens helps insure that the teen remains healthy and happy throughout the high school years.

Gene Linked To Self-Recovery From HCV

Researchers at Johns Hopkins identified a gene that regulates the body's defensive "killer" immune cells, as reported in *Science* online. These cells attack unwanted cells in the body, including bacteria or viruses such as hepatitis C. Unregulated, they could potentially attack healthy cells. Researchers hope this discovery will eventually help in the prevention and treatment of HCV.



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YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

Highlights of HFI's Activities

As we often work behind the scenes, we thought it might be helpful if we provided you with some of the highlights of our activities. Your support of the Hepatitis Foundation International has enabled us to provide critically important services to patients, the medical community and the public as well. We are proud of our many accomplishments gaining national visibility and awareness of viral hepatitis, providing patient support services, increasing research efforts, and laying the groundwork for a sustained attack aimed at bringing viral hepatitis under control.

RESEARCH AWARDS

The goal of HFI's Research Agenda is to identify areas of research that have received little attention and yet have the potential to increase the understanding of both hepatitis B and C. Two outstanding scientists, C.Scott Fung, MD at the University of Michigan Medical Center, and Robert Suruki, a PhD candidate at Harvard School of Public Health received HFI Career Development Awards.

Dr. Fung is focusing on differentiating active and inactive hepatitis B carriers to identify those who may benefit from antiviral therapy. Robert Suruki seeks to identify hepatitis C markers to identify patients who have the potential to progress to more serious disease.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

To improve the quality of care provided patients with viral hepatitis, HFI has gathered together world renowned hepatologists and other health professionals to present cutting edge information on recent advances in treatment and management of patients to healthcare providers from across the nation.

- HFI's *Second Annual National Viral Hepatitis Summit* was held in Mystic, CT with 175 healthcare providers in attendance.
- The *Third Annual National Viral Hepatitis Summit* was held in Baltimore with 167 attendees

The Hepatitis Foundation International founded the *National Nurses Advisory Council On Liver Wellness And Viral Hepatitis* to harness the wisdom and experience of our "frontline" professional health practitioners to promote prevention and improve the health outcomes of hepatitis patients.

A three hour training session was held for members of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses at their annual meeting held in Kansas City, MO. All attendees agreed that they had learned a great deal of new information about the liver and viral hepatitis that would assist them in caring for employees in the respective organizations.

TRAIN THE TRAINER PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATORS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & COUNSELORS

Lectures and training-the-trainer sessions were conducted in collaboration with health departments, government agencies, community organizations, state task forces, substance abuse rehabilitation administrators and staff, professional nurse's organizations and teachers in numerous states reaching intermediaries from every state in the union.

Health Departments Pennsylvania, Maryland, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, New Mexico, and Illinois joined forces with the Hepatitis Foundation International reaching over 2500 healthcare professionals with new approaches and support materials.

School Systems Our materials are being used in numerous schools throughout the country. Six counties in Maryland have adopted HFI's Liver Wellness Educational Program for all their middle and high schools. Over 500 teachers in Maryland have attended our Train-the-Trainer seminars. School nurses in Cleveland, Ohio have shared our unique communication techniques with health educators throughout the city. Elementary, middle and high school health and physical education teachers in Washington, DC welcomed learning about new and effective communication techniques for themselves, their families, as well as for their students.

Substance Abuse Prevention Training Programs As word of the success of HFI's unique Liver Wellness approach in promoting prevention of substance abuse and hepatitis reaches professionals working in the field, requests for training programs are increasing daily. Drug abuse counselors have reported that the liver wellness approach is "missing" in all their efforts to change their client's risky behaviors. Counselors themselves have reported changing some of their own lifestyle behaviors. Recipients of HFI's Training Programs include an increasing number of government agencies, rehabilitation programs, health departments and community organizations such as New Mexico's Health Alliance, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center (Drug Addiction Treatment Center), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Mid Atlantic Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network (ATTC), Blair County, PA Healthy Community Partnership, Danya Institute, and TASC, a Chicago Health Department collaborative.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

- PSA featuring Dan Reeves received thousands of dollars pro bono TV airings through the White House ONDC Campaign
- Eye Witness News WUSA9TV in Washington aired two interviews with Thelma King Thiel on hepatitis
- 30 second PSA on *Risk Behaviors and Hepatitis* approved by ONDCP Campaign
- Four Issues of *Hepatitis Alert*—quarterly newsletter with 40,000 recipients.

- Six Issues of Patient Advocacy Council Newsletter—multiple copies distributed to 500 HCV support groups
- Articles published in numerous magazines including *Family* and *Parent* magazines.
- Article on hepatitis in *Vitality* magazine distributed to major corporations nationwide.
- WKGA-Radio interview, Los Angeles, CA
- Toll Free Hepatitis Information Line—referrals to specialists and support groups

WEBSITE ON LINE LEARNING CENTER

HFI provides updated information on viral hepatitis through presentations by renowned experts in the field with easy access through our On Line Learning Center at www.HepatitisFoundation.org. Additional updated information is available and can be downloaded at your convenience. Previews of several videos are available on the site through QuickTime.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION AND COLLABORATION

Educational materials and videos have been distributed in every state in the Union through schools, churches, health departments, corrections facilities, juvenile detention centers, STD clinics, AIDS organizations, hospitals, safety and labor departments, FBI, addiction treatment centers, corporations (Coca Cola, Lockheed Martin, UPS, Sarah Lee, etc), National Children’s Medical Center, hotel and restaurant suppliers, doctor’s offices, housing projects, homeless shelters, mental health organizations, colleges, pharmacies, Native American Councils, etc.

Over seventy-five thousand videos have been distributed throughout the nation and a new animated DVD and VHS version of HFI’s *Liv and Lucky* coloring book are available for use in elementary schools, churches, and homeless shelters.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

HFI, in collaboration with the Hepatitis B Initiative, has provided education, screening and vaccination programs for members of the Korean Christian Presbyterian Church in Virginia. This project is being supported by Merck, Abbott, and Gilead pharmaceutical companies. Plans include programs for additional Korean churches and others in the Vietnamese community in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Since the Foundation relocated its national office to Maryland, biweekly meetings have been held with legislative representatives on Capitol Hill to highlight the need for liver wellness and preventive education regarding viral hepatitis and substance abuse, and to increase research to find cures. Meetings with leaders of the Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, Congressional Prevention Coalition, newly formed Addiction Caucus and many others have provided an opportunity to inform members of the importance and cost effectiveness of adding essential prevention education at every opportunity along with medical evaluation of those who are infected. We must begin at all levels in our nation’s schools, through public and private organizations, and in all facilities dealing with those at high risk.

Over 200 meetings have been held this year with Congressional representatives laying the groundwork for HFI’s policy promoting health education at all grade levels in schools and through public health facilities in every state.

HFI was responsible for the Continuing Resolution that gave the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the authority to be involved in the *National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable*.

GOVERNMENT LIAISONS

HFI’s Chairwoman and Chief Executive Officer, Thelma King Thiel, just completed a three year term on the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases Advisory Council and previously served two terms on the National Digestive Diseases Advisory Board. She continues in her role as an advisor to the National Digestive Diseases Clearinghouse.

OUR HOLIDAY WISH LIST

To enable us to continue our attack on viral hepatitis through multifaceted programs and activities, we ask you to help us reach out to your community, schools and businesses with liver wellness and important information about viral hepatitis and prevention opportunities. We hope you will support as many of the following initiatives as possible in 2005.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • Each Viral Hepatitis Research Career Development Award | \$ 15,000 |
| • Training-the-Trainer Program for 25 Teachers/Nurses/Drug Abuse Counselors Plus Materials | \$ 2,500 |
| • Series of Five Videos and Educational Materials for Your Local Library | \$ 250 |
| • Liv and Lucky Coloring Books for 25 Elementary School Students plus Animated Video | \$ 100 |
| • Videos for Middle and High School Students on Liver Wellness/Prevention of Hepatitis—each | \$ 37 |

Your Investment Today Can Save Many Lives for Years to Come

Research Advances continued

CHI CHI'S PAYS \$2 MILLION IN SETTLEMENTS: Hepatitis A infected green onions shipped from Mexico and served in Chi-Chi's restaurant in Beaver Valley Mall, Pennsylvania infected 600 people with four deaths reported. The restaurant chain must pay more than \$2 million in settlements to customers who suffered from the hepatitis A outbreak. Hepatitis A is a virus found in feces and transmitted when food or water contaminated with infected feces is ingested.

HEPATITIS A CASES UP FOUR FOLD IN MASSACHUSETTS: Public health officials wonder if the cycle of hepatitis A combined with cases reported in Boston suburbs involving infected restaurant workers caused this four fold increase. About 4,000 immune globulin injections were given free compared to an average of 500 in past years. Dr. Anita Barry, the city's director of communicable disease control, reported that many cases have turned up in people at high risk of hepatitis A because of living circumstances including homelessness, drug or alcohol addictions and jail inmates. Health officials plan to increase public awareness of hepatitis A, including better hand washing after using the toilet and the availability of hepatitis A vaccines.

STUDY EXAMINES COST EFFECTIVENESS OF SCREENING FOR HCV: A study in France determined that extension of hepatitis C screening to risk groups other than transfused patients and illicit drug users implies a substantial increase in healthcare costs as well as public concern for such expenditures.

SPONTANEOUS CLEARANCE OF HCV IN GENOTYPE 3: A report in the Journal of Medical Virology states that 15% - 50% of untreated patients with genotype 3 may clear the virus spontaneously. Although treating acute hepatitis C (initiated within 3 months after infection) with interferon alpha prevents chronicity in nearly all cases, researchers in Germany suggest not to treat acute hepatitis C genotype 3 infection early but to wait at least 3 months after the onset of symptoms when chronicity becomes likely.

HCV FOUND IN SERA AFTER RESOLUTION OF INFECTION: Results of studies conducted by T.N.Q. Pham at Memorial University in Newfoundland imply that HCV RNA can persist at very low levels in the serum and peripheral lymphoid cells and that an intermediate replicative form of the HCV genome can persist in peripheral blood mononuclear cells for many years after apparently complete spontaneous or antiviral therapy-induced resolution of chronic hepatitis C.

PROGNOSIS OF CIRRHOSIS DETERMINED AFTER INITIAL EPISODE OF ENCEPHALOPATHY: A study of 100 patients with liver cirrhoses complicated by hepatitis encephalopathy by K. Yoneyama, Showa University in Japan, determined that the cumulative survival rates after the first episode of hepatic encephalopathy was: 59.1% after 1 year; 48.3% after 2 years, and 22.2% after 5 years.

GENETIC SCREENING MAKES TRANSPLANTS SAFER: Currently, donor tissue is screened using viral tests checking for the presence of antibodies. This procedure can miss some early infections. The estimated undetected infected donor rate is very low, about 1 donor a year. However, tissue from one donor is typically distributed to as many as 50 recipients. Genetic screening of donor tissue is able to detect the presence of disease, not just the body's immune response, greatly reducing the incidence of infected donor tissue. The use of genetic screening is becoming more common among tissue centers nationwide, and is already helping prevent transmission of HIV and hepatitis C through the nation's blood supply.

LOCALIZED CHEMO USED IN LIVER CANCER TREATMENTS: Hepatitis arterial chemotherapy that requires a reservoir/pump system targets chemotherapy drugs directly to the liver and the liver cancer via a catheter. Done on an outpatient basis, the interventional radiologist implants the reservoir and mechanically blocks the arteries to the adjacent areas during the port placement to prevent the influx of drugs to areas outside of the liver. A. Hamada reported in Journal of Vascular Intero. Radiol. 2004 that arterial infusion chemotherapy was performed 13.1 times per patient on average. Tumors completely disappeared in one patient; shrunk at least 50% in five patients, and remained stable in 68 patients (77%). No tumors showed progression.

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This information is designed for educational purposes only and is not intended to substitute for informed medical advice. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem.

The Mission of HFI is to bring viral hepatitis under control through preventive education, research to find effective treatments and cures. The HFI serves as advocates for patients and the medical community.

BETTER DETECTION OF LIVER CANCER: Current procedures for the detection of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) offer “rather poor” results, explained J.M. Correas of the Necker Hospital, Adult Radiology Service in Paris, France. By using ultrasound contrast agents, detection is improved and characterization of additional focal lesions is possible. However, limitations still remain in this examination. This study was published in the *Journal de Radiologie*.

VACCINATION BARRIERS AMONG KOREAN AMERICANS: Three social determinants have been identified that contribute to the under vaccination of Korean American children for hepatitis B (HBV), as reported in the *Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved*. These determinants include: Information support concerning parenting and child health, perception that HBV is a difficult disease from which to recover, and difficulty paying for the immunizations.

NEW COMPOUND REVERSES FIBROSIS IN EARLY STUDIES: Intercept Pharmaceuticals, Inc. reports in *Gastroenterology* that their new compound stops development, and may even reverse liver fibrosis, in animal models. Human trials of this potential treatment are scheduled to begin in early 2005.

BLACK PATIENTS LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE LIVER TRANSPLANT: A new study conducted at Massachusetts General Hospital, and published in *Liver Transplantation*, suggests that black patients are less likely to be placed on the waiting list for liver transplant than are white patients. Conversely, mortality data indicate that the black population has a higher prevalence of end-stage liver disease.

HERBAL MEDICINE COMMON CAUSE OF LIVER TOXICITY: Herbal medicine induced hepatotoxicity is becoming more common as patients turn to alternative medicine more often. As reported in *Drug Metabolism Reviews*, this trend poses real problems for health care professionals because drug-induced liver disease can mimic the features of all other acute and chronic liver diseases. Early identification may avert serious liver injury.

INTERFERON MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH LIVER TRANSPLANT: Researchers at UCLA have concluded that the use of interferon after liver transplant may lead to acute rejection and graft loss. Further study is necessary to fully assess the safety of interferon in LT recipients, it may be used with caution. (Published in *Liver Transplantation*.)



The *National Nurses Advisory Council for Liver Wellness and Viral Hepatitis* is mobilizing nurses from across the nation to improve hepatitis related outcomes by initiating collaborative programs on three fronts:

- to promote education and prevention,
- to improve the quality of care given to patients, and
- to serve as advocates for patients, researchers, and medical professionals

For more information about joining the NNAC and getting involved, please send us your E Mail address.

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