

Changing our ailing healthcare system includes promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors. A huge task at best! The Hepatitis Foundation International (HFI) has a “leg up” on promoting healthy lifestyles in collaboration with many private and government agencies.

All Americans want to be healthy, and yet many have not had access to some basic information about how to stay healthy or what things they may be inadvertently doing in their daily lives that could cause them serious health problems in the future.

HFI has been crisscrossing the country providing healthcare providers, college peer educators, substance abuse counselors, social workers, physician’s assistants, and teachers with quick and easy communication techniques and DVDs to share with their peers, their families, friends and anyone who will listen. The last health education the majority of adults in the country received was in middle school. Unfortunately, most courses lacked sufficient information to have a demonstrable impact on promoting healthy lifestyles.

Congratulations to North Eastern Illinois University (NEIU), Virginia Union University (VUU), University of Maryland University (UMD), and Alabama A & M (AAM) for partnering with HFI in training their student “peer educators” to arm them with upbeat and motivating health promoting messages to share with other students and in their outreach to their communities. NEIU students, many from Hispanic communities, were pleased to learn new and upbeat techniques to help them provide important health promoting information with families in their communities. Several theology students at VUU learned new and not threatening techniques to promote healthy lifestyles among the parishioners in their churches.

HFI’s *Foundation for Decision Making Training* program is called “edutainment.” We make learning fun and memorable by using story telling techniques folks can relate to in their daily lives that encourage them to avoid liver damaging activities. Former Director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, commented that almost 50% of the disease burden in the U. S. is related to unhealthy lifestyle behaviors. As President Obama said “We have to work together to make things better.” That means working together to promote WELLNESS among young and old alike. We need to put more than a band aide on our sick society.

What can you do? Visit www.hepatitisfoundation.org. Read about liver health and download the information to share with others. Preview our DVDs to choose the most useful one for your family. *Liv and Lucky* is for preschoolers and K – 3; *Give Your Liver a Break* is for pre teens and teens (this won an EMMY Award); *The Silent Stalker* is for high school and college kids plus other adults who may be participating in risky behaviors; and *The Invisible Threat* is a wonderful training DVD for educators and healthcare providers. There is something for everyone with easy to understand animation to make the messages come alive.

Our goal, our mission is to help all Americans be healthier. Please call us to learn more about what we do and how you can help.

