California Law - Hepatitis Screening and Linkage to Care

On October 4th, Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 789 into law, making California the first state in the country to provide adults voluntary screenings for hepatitis B and C in an effort to save countless lives and close disparities in diagnosis and treatment.

Liver disease and liver cancer caused by hepatitis B and C account for more than a third of the liver transplants in California. AB 789 will save lives and California taxpayer dollars by mandating that health facilities in 2022 begin offering voluntary testing at routine medical appointments, and provide care and treatment for persons who test positive.

Asian Liver Center Celebrated Our 25th Anniversary with Passage of AB 789

The bill, authored by Assemblymembers Evan Low, Mike Gipson, David Chiu, and Senator Richard Pan received unanimous, bipartisan support in the California Legislature, providing a model for other states to follow. The legislation was created in collaboration with the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University and co-sponsored by State Treasurer Fiona Ma and The Health Trust, a Silicon Valley based nonprofit operating foundation focused on building health equity.

We are grateful to our partners and the many new supporters across the various sectors including multi-ethnic non-profits, professional and public health organizations for their advocacy efforts throughout the California legislative process to pass AB 789. They helped submit hundreds of letters of support for AB 789 to state senators and state assemblymembers.

Community Impact

"Congratulations to the ALC who worked relentlessly to get AB 789 approved and address this urgent health equity issue. Our family thanks Dr. So and his team! We were happy to be a part of this as supporters. Working with the ALC and Dr. So was very meaningful for us."

-Camille and Colin C.

Media Coverage

We received wide media coverage throughout the year especially with the focus on AB 789. Scope, which is Stanford Medicine’s award winning blog interviewed Dr. So and published the article, "Bill supported by Stanford doctor, guards against hepatitis" which discusses why the bill is important, how big of a problem hepatitis B and C are in California, and what puts communities of color at higher risk. Other media coverage include press releases such as...
"Assemblymember Evan Low’s AB 789 Bill Pushes for Voluntary Testing of Hepatitis B and C" and "Assemblymember Evan Low Introduces AB 789 to Address Disparities in California’s Testing and Treatment for Hepatitis B and C". Other Chinese media outlets also published articles about the ALC, including the article from Sing Tao Daily, "State Assemblyman Evan Low Proposes to Strengthen Hepatitis Testing and Treatment."

On October 21, 2021, KQED Forum, a live call-in radio program, discussed "California Pioneers Mandatory Testing for Hepatitis B and C" with Dr. So; Aileen Casanave, President, California Association of Black Lawyers; and a seventh grader and advocate from Palo Alto, California. Hosted by Mina Kim, they talked about how the new law will work and took questions from callers.

We are delighted to introduce Nancy K. Masuda to the ALC as the Associate Director of Strategic Partnerships and Communications. A lawyer by background, Nancy’s experience spans both public and private sectors, with a focus on healthcare policy, compliance, and government relations.

Nancy is responsible for leading high impact partnerships in support of ALC’s mission, and directing the development and execution of strategic communications. Nancy is enjoying meeting and collaborating with many of our partners, and leading ALC youth and interns. Our many thanks and best wishes to Mie-Na Hwang who left us in 2021 to devote her energy in raising her children after 8 years at the ALC.
WORD HEPATITIS DAY

Each year, the World Health Organization calls on all nations and the global community to commemorate World Hepatitis Day on July 28th to raise awareness and mobilize support for action to eliminate viral hepatitis. In 2021, the official World Health Organization’s slogan was "Hepatitis Can’t Wait". The ALC at Stanford Medicine, North East Medical Services (NEMS), and SF Hep B Free Bay Area held a press conference in honor of World Hepatitis Day, where Dr. So and other leaders from each organization shared best practices and discussed strategies for combating hepatitis B among vulnerable Asian American communities in the Bay Area.

JOINJADE CAMPAIGN

JoinJade is a global campaign to fight stigma, end transmission, and eliminate deaths associated with hepatitis B. Every year we hang banners on University Avenue in Palo Alto to raise awareness for hepatitis B and promote the JoinJade campaign in our local community. As part of their outreach efforts, the summer interns gathered and successfully organized a group activity with their JoinJade shirts and put up the banners.

PERINATAL HEPATITIS B PREVENTION PROGRAM

Alondra Morales, Health Program Specialist, and the Texas Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program (PHBPP) team members led an event in San Antonio Metropolitan Health District explaining the mission and purpose of PHBPP.

ADVOCACY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

We increased our advocacy engagement through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, informing our followers about significant events and updates. Interns raised awareness for World Hepatitis Day by creating a snapshot of matching Zoom backgrounds with this year’s theme "Hepatitis Can’t Wait". They led social media campaigns with daily postings about hepatitis B.

19TH ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (YLC)

On July 27, 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom presented a World Hepatitis Day commemorative letter that encourages our state agencies, non-profit organizations, health care organizations, businesses, and communities across California to help increase hepatitis awareness and prevent new infections and to increase screening and treatment to prevent deaths and suffering.

Due to Covid-19, this year’s conference was held virtually. Over 100 participants engaged in leadership sessions in the context of media, business, management, public health, and cultural identity. These learnings were reflected in their final Team Challenge where they were tasked with developing a hepatitis B digital media campaign.
19TH YLC KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Keynote speakers for this year’s YLC included Dion Lim, Emmy Award-winning TV news anchor and reporter at ABC7/KGO-TV in San Francisco, and Grace Xia, Founder and Executive Director of Asian Uplift. Both were huge inspirations to the youth.

COLLEGIATE CONFERENCE

Chapter members from across the nation participated in a 2-day conference centered on the post-pandemic future of global health, featuring accomplished speakers and a conference related to hepatitis advocacy.

THE PRESIDENT’S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

Congratulations to Tien Minh Nguyen and Alison Lok-See Ho who received the gold award through their volunteer service and dedication at the ALC in 2021.

ALC PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR TEAM HBV HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CHAPTERS

We provided support through start-up kits and served as an advisory arm for various Team HBV high school and college chapters. Student advocates set up club fairs at their schools, using creative ideas to get involved in community engagement and awareness.

JOINJADE YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

We launched the application process for the JoinJade Youth Ambassadors program for high school students. Selected high school students will collaborate with ALC staff, interns, and volunteers to develop awareness projects geared towards increasing testing, linkage to care, treatment, vaccination, and elimination of stigma and discrimination.

ALC INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS

The ALC college internship programs for the academic year and the summer session have remained strong and successful with talented, high-potential students working together virtually in various specialties alongside the ALC staff to promote a healthier community through hepatitis B and liver cancer prevention. Interns made significant contributions towards community outreach, research, graphic design, legislation, digital content, and social media.
CHINA OUTREACH

CDC

ALC Beijing maintains a close relationship with China Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2021, ALC Beijing, a well-trusted and long-term working partner with China CDC was assigned to design posters for national publicity. The educational posters included information about Covid-19 vaccination, World Immunization Week, and World Hepatitis Day.

On World Hepatitis Day, ALC Beijing collaborated with CDC of Songjiang District, Shanghai to raise public awareness of hepatitis B in the local community.

MEDIA

During the World Hepatitis Day period, hepatitis B became a significant social topic of discussion. ALC Beijing’s World Hepatitis Day posters and hepatitis B related articles were widely used and reposted by various media platforms such as CCTV (National TV), Tencent, and Toutiao.

NGO

ALC Beijing's major focus has been community education on eliminating hepatitis B and its stigma. Despite our program being severely affected by Covid-19 and a typhoon during the summer, we collaborated with 44 NGOs from different cities and reached out to the local community to raise public awareness of hepatitis B. We were faced with challenges caused by the different cultures and various local languages. However, with the support of the NGOs, hepatitis B can be better informed and studied by the local people.

SUBWAY & BUS STOPS

In Beijing, over 6 million people use the bus as their daily transportation and 10.35 million people use the subway. ALC Beijing continued to collaborate with the Beijing public transportation officials to raise public awareness of hepatitis B by posting ALC’s WHD posters at over 50 subway and bus stops.
Leah Dou, a cross-border artist, singer, and actress, took a major stand for hepatitis B as a JoinJade Ambassador for China. Leah called for her fans, which includes 5.86 million followers on Weibo, to fight against hepatitis B discrimination. ALC Beijing’s partnership poster and video released on World Hepatitis Day reached 314,000 people on Weibo/WeChat. Celebrities like Leah have helped to spread awareness quickly.

During the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, former Olympic champ Li Xiaopeng (13.14 million fans on Weibo) and reigning Asia Games female tennis gold medalist Wang Qiang (240,000+ fans on Weibo), collaborated with ALC Beijing to raise public awareness of hepatitis B. ALC Beijing partnership posters were posted on both the athletes' personal Weibo Channels which resulted in a positive and welcoming response by their fans.

To build a zero hepatitis B discrimination working atmosphere, ALC Beijing continued to work closely with our corporate partners. In 2021, 9 companies did online and onsite activities to recognize hepatitis B and its stigma within. Apple and ALC jointly held an online hepatitis B lecture for the Asian-Pacific regional staff. Both BP and Honeywell held various onsite activities to raise awareness of hepatitis B and encourage staff to have the right attitude towards hepatitis B patients.
SUPPORTED BY THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

ALC Beijing collaborated with ‘BLUED’, the largest LGBTQ social media site in China, with over 49 million registered and 8 million daily active users. The operating company, BlueCity Holdings Ltd. arranged a hepatitis B lecture for ALC Beijing to educate staff. In addition, BLUED and ALC Beijing jointly held a live broadcasting through the BLUED app on World Hepatitis Day, sharing hepatitis B knowledge to the community and answering questions of most concern. Over 70,000 users watched the live broadcasting. The recording was also added to the app resource afterwards.

DONATION FOR JADE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BP took part in ALC Beijing’s Jade primary school donation event for the first time, sending well wishes and support to children in need. Apple has been a supportive partner and participated in the donation event for the past 3 years. The books donated by Apple and BP were highly welcomed by the children.

TSINGHUA AFFILIATED HIGH SCHOOL VISIT

The China office set up a partnership with Tsinghua affiliated high school’s foundation. We agreed to work closely to encourage more students to participate in our Qingqing and Shenshen funds within all the schools’ campuses in China. On June 12th, ALC Beijing visited the main campus of Tsinghua, and delivered a lecture to teachers and students.

SHENSHEN & QINGQING OUTREACH

37 college and 15 high school teams joined ALC Beijing’s Shenshen Fund, Qingqing Fund and summer practice during 2021. Beijing was faced with the ongoing widespread of Covid-19. The typhoon also caused the torrential rain throughout the entire summer and major damage to most middle and southern provinces in China, which impacted our program. However, despite these challenges, it did not reduce the enthusiasm of our students. Our teams had reached out to some rural areas and local communities which lacked hepatitis B resources and knowledge. We developed creative activities to raise awareness and educate others about hepatitis B.
ONLINE TRAINING FOR SUMMER PRACTICE TEAMS

ALC Beijing supported summer practice teams in every possible way such as providing educational and promotional materials, including T-shirts, mascots, caps, and bracelets. We also encouraged students to participate in social welfare activities. ALC Beijing held an online training for all the participants to ensure everyone possessed the accurate knowledge of hepatitis B. On June 28th, ALC Beijing held an online training to initiate 2021 summer practice and to educate every student within the program.

INTERNS & VOLUNTEERS ENGAGEMENT

ALC Beijing encourage college students to be a part of HBV team, and support their experience to discover the true meaning of building a hepatitis B free world. ALC Beijing office engaged with 16 students from different universities including Peking University, Tsinghua University, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Beijing Foreign Studies University, coaching them to participate in our program management as interns and volunteers. Each semester, the students organized online/offline HBV campaigns on campus.

FLOWER ART

On April 25th, ALC Beijing held a "flower art" event at Peking University. The event's purpose was to raise public awareness of hepatitis B and promote "Shenshen" college students program in the university's campus. Over 30 students joined the onsite event, and over 20,000 students responded positively to the event on social media.

RUN FOR HEALTH

"Run for health, together, let's say no to hepatitis B discrimination." On May 12th, ALC Beijing held a night jog event at Peking University to promote jade ribbon on the university campus. It called on students to fight against hepatitis B discrimination. Over 2,000 university students participated in the event and drew 100,000 views on social media.

JADE ARTIST

On December 10th, ALC Beijing initiated a "Jade Artist" contest on Weibo, and encouraged participants to create posters and videos to raise public awareness of hepatitis B and eliminate discrimination. The contest drew over 20,000 views within a week and 20 contestants made it to the finals. All the posters and videos will be posted on the ALC Weibo channel in the upcoming year.
GLOBAL

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2021 MONGOLIA

Mongolia’s National Center for the Communicable Disease (NCCD) organized a World Hepatitis Day event with the 2021 theme "Hepatitis Can’t Wait". Dr. Battur, General Director of NCCD disseminated the Know HBV training app developed by the ALC during the press conference and about 10 TV channels including the national broadcaster streamed the event. Also, a press release was distributed to the TV and news sites. NCCD organized a zoom meeting with 21 provinces and nine districts to highlight World Hepatitis Day and disseminated the hepatitis training app.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS ON PREVENTION OF MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION IN VIETNAM

We worked in collaboration with the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support the government of Vietnam in training health care workers in 8 provinces on newborn hepatitis B vaccination and prevention of mother to child transmission of hepatitis B. The pre and post-training test results showed average participant scores improved by 26.5% after the training.

We also implemented an educational campaign to raise hepatitis B awareness among pregnant women to promote the importance of newborn vaccination.

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES TOWARD HEPATITIS B VIRUS INFECTION AMONG STUDENTS OF MEDICINE IN VIETNAM

A cross-sectional study that evaluated the knowledge, attitudes and practices of medical students from eight medical universities in Vietnam about HBV found a lack of trust in the hepatitis B vaccine safety and lack of confidence in providing counseling, testing and management of patients with chronic hepatitis B. Findings from our research emphasized an urgent need to improve the medical schools’ training curriculum in Vietnam to enable students’ readiness in hepatitis B prevention and management. This research was done in collaboration with eight medical schools in Vietnam and published on the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in 2021.
NEW THERAPEUTIC TOOLS TO DISRUPT CANCER GROWTH

In addition to traditionally used small molecule drugs, our lab continues to work with experts in Israel to investigate new biological agents as novel therapeutic agents to disrupt liver cancer growth. An example of this is peptide (a short protein fragment) inhibitors of protein-protein interactions that are critical for supporting the growth of cancer cells.

T-CELLS AS BIOMARKERS OF LIVER CANCER

Working with bioinformatics experts at Michigan State University, we have identified and validated a subgroup of T-cells to be promising blood biomarkers of liver cancer, as well as of late-stage liver diseases that have the propensity to develop into liver cancer. "We are further studying the biological functions of these T-cells to understand how they contribute towards liver cancer development."

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DRUG CANDIDATES FOR LIVER CANCER

We continue to make structural and formulation changes to the repurposed drug candidates previously identified in our lab, so that they can be translated for clinical use. One of these new analogs was recently demonstrated to show anti-tumor efficacy in animal models of liver cancer.

ONE-TIME SCREENING FOR HEPATITIS B

According to our new study that was published in Clinical Infectious Diseases in June 2021, a one-time, universal screening for chronic hepatitis B infection could prevent 23,000 additional deaths from chronic HBV-related liver disease and save about $600 million. The published study, done in partnership with the CDC will support a national recommendation for universal screening of adults for chronic hepatitis B in the US.

PRICE TAG OF A POTENTIAL CURE FOR HEPATITIS B INFECTION

In our recent cost-effectiveness paper that was published in Liver International, we captured the economic impact of a potential cure for chronic hepatitis B infection in USA, China and Australia with different health systems and epidemics in collaboration with our partners at the Peter Doherty Institute in Melbourne, Australia.
THANK YOU

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