



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 28, 2021

### **World Hepatitis Day**

Viral hepatitis related illness takes the lives of 1.1 million people worldwide each year. More people die in California from hepatitis B and C related liver disease than in any state, and over a third of the liver transplants each year are performed for liver disease or cancer caused by viral hepatitis.

Californians can protect themselves and their loved ones from viral hepatitis by learning about the vaccines available against hepatitis A and B, the simple steps to get screened for chronic hepatitis B and C and the highly effective treatments that could prevent complications and deaths. This is especially important for Asian and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos, who are more likely to die from hepatitis liver disease than Caucasians.

Because hepatitis B and C can live silently in a person for many years before symptoms develop, a one-time screening test will lead to early diagnosis and treatment to prevent disease complications and deaths. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that only one third of those living with hepatitis B and 60 percent living with hepatitis C are aware of their infection. In California, hepatitis B and C screening according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendations and antiviral treatment for hepatitis B and C are covered by Medi-Cal, Medicare and by ACA compliant health plans.

The World Health Organization's slogan for this year's World Hepatitis Day is 'Hepatitis Can't Wait'. I encourage our state agencies, non-profit organizations, health care organizations, businesses and communities across California to help increase hepatitis awareness to prevent new infections and to increase screening and treatment to prevent deaths and suffering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line.

Gavin Newsom