

# HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B Foundation | Hep B United Philadelphia

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### For Philadelphia

Continue to improve healthcare infrastructure, making it user friendly for populations with limited English proficiency.

### For Healthcare Providers

Screen those most at risk for hepatitis B infection including people born in Asia and Africa and their children, all pregnant women, and people with HIV. Provide hepatitis B vaccinations for those who have not yet been vaccinated.

### For Community Partners

Work together to reduce stigma associated with hepatitis B through community education and outreach.

### For Individuals

Follow us on social media, support our coalition partners, and join or volunteer at our events.



2012: City Resolution declaring May as Hepatitis B Awareness Month in Philadelphia

## Background

Hepatitis B is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV).<sup>1,2</sup> Transmission of HBV occurs primarily through blood, semen, or other bodily fluids from an infected person.<sup>1,2</sup> The most common method of transmission is during birth from mother-to-child.<sup>2</sup> Hepatitis B is also transmitted through the sharing of syringes, needles, or other drug-injection equipment and sexual contact.<sup>1</sup> HBV infection is associated with serious complications in the liver, such as liver cancer and cirrhosis.<sup>1,2</sup> The best method of prevention is through vaccination.<sup>1</sup> The vaccine to protect against hepatitis B has been available since 1982, and is 95% effective in preventing HBV infection and associated complications.<sup>2</sup>

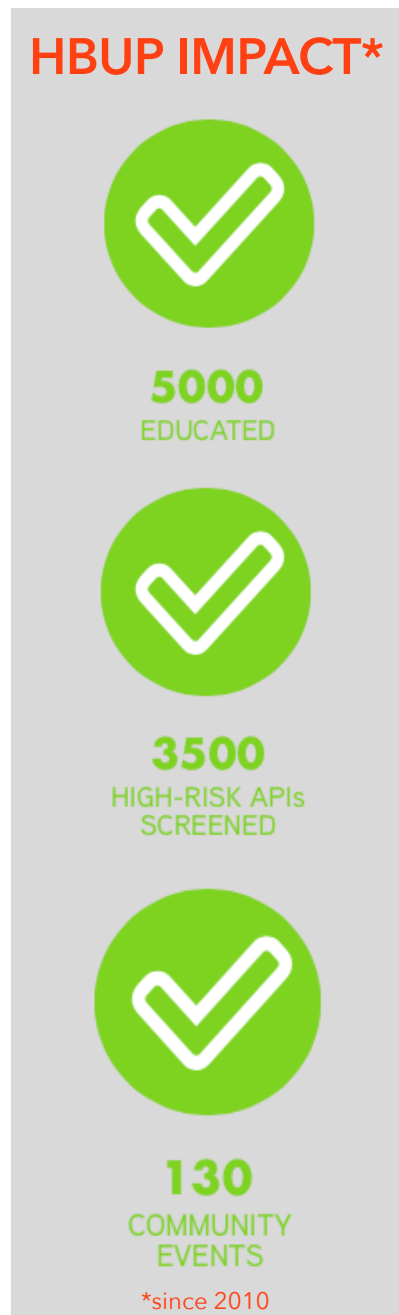
Since individuals infected with HBV are asymptomatic and do not show symptoms, only 25–30% of the 2 million infected individuals in the United States are aware they have the virus, and it is estimated that about 25% of premature deaths in the United States are associated with hepatitis B.<sup>3</sup> HBV disproportionately affects Asian Americans and Pacific

Islanders (AAPI) in the United States, as about 80-85% of AAPI liver cancer cases have been linked to HBV as the primary cause.<sup>4</sup> In Philadelphia, it is estimated that 8–12% of the Chinese and Vietnamese population are living with chronic hepatitis B.<sup>5,6</sup> The African immigrant population in Philadelphia is also negatively impacted by HBV, but limited data is available regarding the incidence and prevalence of HBV within this community.

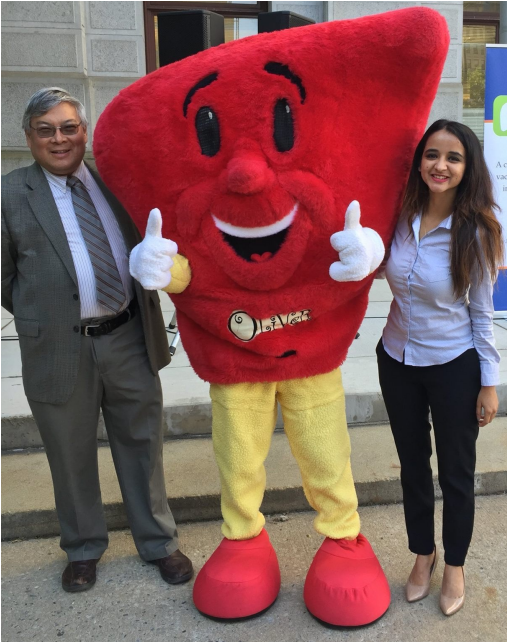
## Hep B United Philadelphia

Hep B United Philadelphia (HBUP) is a citywide coalition and campaign led by the Hepatitis B Foundation. The primary goals of the coalition include raising the public profile of hepatitis B and liver cancer as an urgent health priority, increasing hepatitis B testing and vaccination rates, and involving and mobilizing stakeholders and policy decision-makers to improve access to care for both the prevention and treatment of hepatitis B and liver cancer.

In the past, Hep B United Philadelphia has partnered with the Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health to perform research aimed at better understanding the burden of hepatitis B among Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs) in Philadelphia. Using data collected by HBUP from 2011–2013, a series of maps were created using GIS mapping resources to identify areas where hepatitis B screening events had taken place. These maps were then used to identify locations for future screening events. Additionally, research has been done to identify socio-ecological determinants of hepatitis B screening behavior among Asians and Pacific Islanders in Philadelphia. Multiple inter-related determinants at all levels were found to have an impact on screening behaviors among Philadelphia APIs, which HBUP is currently working to address.



2014: Hep B Awareness Month with O’Liver and Councilman Oh



2016: O'Liver and Former Health Commissioner Dr. Walter Tsou, MD, MPH at the Hepatitis Press Conference

Because Asian Americans and African immigrant populations are disproportionately affected by hepatitis B compared to other groups, many of Hep B United Philadelphia's efforts are focused in Chinatown, South Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia, as well as West Philadelphia. Since its initiation, HBUP has hosted multiple community-based HBV education and screening events. In fact, the coalition has educated over 5,000 individuals at over 130 community events; offered free screenings to 3,500 high-risk Asian Pacific Islanders; and helped close to 200 limited English proficient and underinsured infected individuals find an appropriate medical home.

## Looking Ahead

In order to improve health outcomes in the area of hepatitis B, 1) Philadelphia should continue to improve its healthcare infrastructure, making it user friendly for populations with limited English proficiency by providing language access to essential health services; 2) health care providers should

screen for those most at risk for hepatitis B including: people born in Asia, Africa, and other regions with moderate or high rates of hepatitis B, unvaccinated individuals whose parents are from regions with high rates of hepatitis B, anyone having sex with a person infected with hepatitis B, people who live with someone with hepatitis B, men who have sexual encounters with other men, people who inject drugs, all pregnant women, people with HIV infection, people on hemodialysis and individuals immunocompromised;<sup>7</sup> 3) community partners should work towards reducing the negative stigma associated with hepatitis B through community education and outreach.

To get involved locally with Hep B United Philadelphia, we encourage those interested to:

- Follow @HepBUnitedPhila on Twitter and Instagram
- Like us on Facebook
- Assist with maintaining local infrastructure
- Support our coalition partners
- Come volunteer with us or join our events

## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2015). Hepatitis B. Viral Hepatitis. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/>.
2. World Health Organization (WHO). (2017). Hepatitis B Fact Sheet. Media centre. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs204/en/>.
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4. El-Serag, H.B., & Rudolph, K.L. (2007). Hepatocellular carcinoma: Epidemiology and molecular carcinogenesis. *Gastroenterology*. 132, 2557-2576.
5. Philadelphia Department of Public Health Division of Communicable Diseases, unpublished data.
6. Cohen, C. (2015). Chronic HBV Infection and Community-Based Services for High-Risk Asians and Pacific Islanders [dissertation]. Philadelphia, PA. Drexel University.
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2010). Hepatitis B: Are you at risk? Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/pdfs/hepbatrisk-bw.pdf>.