



CHIPO: Coalition Against Hepatitis

for People of African Origin

Conference Call Minutes

Monday July 19th, 2023

3:00-4:00 pm EDT

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88938514616>

Phone: +1 646 558 8656

**Attendees: Please let me know if I missed you, misspelled your name, or got only your partial information!**

Luul (LWVMC), Kara Sapp (Hep B Foundation), Beatrice Zovich (Hep B Foundation), Chari Cohen (Hep B Foundation), Seun Aluko (Columbus DOH), Elizabeth Koch (Columbus DOH), MaryGrace Sharp (Asian Health Coalition, Chicago), Leso Munala (St. Catherine University, MN), Farma Pene (NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene), Alma Chavez (NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene), Agatha Adigwe (Multicultural AIDS Coalition, Boston), Mwape Chisonde (HEP Initiative of Zambia), John Ward (Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination), Ganiat Sarumi Disu (African Health Coalition, Chicago), Kenneth Kabagambe (National Organization for People Living with Hepatitis B, Uganda), Kendra Pelz (VBI Vaccines), Myra, Nonso Maduka (Bensther Development Foundation, Nigeria), Jean-Jacques Kayembe (King County Department of Health and Congolese Health Board, Seattle, WA), Janet Afoakwah (United States Coalition for African Immigrant Health), Maurizio Bonacini (San Francisco), Amadou Diagne (Gilead Sciences)

**3:00pm: Welcome and Updates:**

- New #BtheVoice international storytellers from the Philippines and Taiwan being featured on Hepatitis B Foundation social media throughout the month of July – feel free to share! (@hepbfoundation)
- All #justB and #BtheVoice stories can be found on our website: [www.hepbstories.org](http://www.hepbstories.org)
- The World Hepatitis Alliance has two webinars coming up for World Hepatitis Day next week:
  - Community Forum on July 25<sup>th</sup> at 1pm London Time: [Register here](#).
  - Beating Hepatitis and Cancer Together on July 27<sup>th</sup> at 1pm London Time: [Register here](#).
- The application for the Hep B United mini-grant for US partners can be found [here](#). The deadline to apply is August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm Pacific Time. All questions should be directed to [frank.hood@hepb.org](mailto:frank.hood@hepb.org).

**3:15pm: Experience from an HBU Mini-Grant Recipient – Dr. Ganiat Sarumi Disu (African Health Coalition, Chicago)**

- Used mini grant to contribute to eliminating hepatitis B in her community among African immigrants and refugees
- Experienced both joy and excitement, but also resentment
- Challenges:
  - Community members had a lack of knowledge, but thought that they were informed about hepatitis B.
  - Some were aware of risks, but many believe in myths about hepatitis B
  - Utilized cultural sensitivity and competence to engage with community
  - Connected community members to care and followed up with them
  - Took holistic approach in working with community
  - Myths and stigma are challenges that can be overcome with education; facts need to be reinforced
- Myths:
  - HBV can be shared through touch

- Pregnant people cannot get HBV
  - Community members tend to keep their HBV status to themselves because of the stigma
- Approached hepatitis B plan in phases
  - Phase I: Outreach
  - Phase II: Education
  - Phase III: Hepatitis B screening
  - Phase IV: Follow up and linkage to care
  - Phase V: Further follow up to strengthen connections within the community
- Moving forward
  - There are so many in this community who have not been screened
  - Many in this community are migratory; they move around within the community and around the world
- What can we do to move this work onto a global scale? Local work is important, but education and screening are needed globally
  - Cultural sensitivity is important to build trust
  - Connecting the community to social support is crucial

**3:30pm: GAVI's Reintroduction of Hep B Birth Dose Vaccination in Africa, Dr. John Ward, Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination**

- HBV birth dose is critically important to African region
  - 17% of newborns receive birth dose
- CDC started community practice programs in Africa to help build capacity among other communities
  - Started study in Africa to further identify gaps
  - Toolkit launched for developing HBV vaccine guidelines in Africa
  - Supporting civil society organizations in five countries to support HBV vaccine
    - Education materials
    - Trained birth attendants
    - High level meetings with health officials
- Survey to identify the impact of COVID response funding from GAVI in scale-up and HBV vaccine
  - GAVI support is high priority for many countries in HBV vaccine roll-out
  - Identify challenges for HBV vaccine introduction
    - Healthcare worker training
    - Awareness
    - Outreach for home birth attendants
    - Data collection
- On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, GAVI approved re-starting the introduction of HBV vaccine birth dose vaccine program
  - Potential to avert 500k deaths from liver cancer
    - Addressing challenges reaching pregnant people in rural areas in Africa
    - Community health workers and targeted, tailored strategies for reaching people in their homes
  - Even in facility births, all health professionals must be on board and educated about HBV birth dose
- Breaking down silos and making maternal health comprehensive can improve infant health outcomes overall

**3:50pm: Questions**

**3:55pm: Member Updates**

Feel free to send member news and updates you might have to the listserv!

**4:00pm: Conclusion**

We will be having an event to celebrate NAIRHHA Day in September – more information to come! Our next regularly scheduled meeting will be on **Wednesday September 20<sup>th</sup> at 3pm Eastern Time.**

Thanks so much for joining! Please keep us updated about research and programmatic news and let us know if you'd like to present at the next meeting!