



Annual Outcomes Report

OCTOBER 2018 - OCTOBER 2019





Last year, Hep B United Philadelphia (HBUP) participated in 34 health education and screening events for communities in need, health professionals, and clinical students. Throughout the year, we reached 1,727 individuals and screened 290 individuals for hepatitis B (HBV). Of those screened, 20 were positive for HBV, and 76 were not immune to HBV. More than 80% of those with positive tests were successfully linked to care. Approximately 60% of those who were not immune were referred to a federally qualified health center (FQHC), local clinic, or primary care provider for vaccination. This report highlights specific achievements from last year (October 2018-19).



At a screening event in partnership with the African Family Health Organization (AFAHO) and HepTREC, we met a woman in Philadelphia who visited the emergency room (ER) multiple times that year for persistent flu-like symptoms and pain. Providers could not determine the cause of her condition, and she kept returning to the ER. At this screening event, she tested positive for HBV. AFAHO was able to find her a culturally competent provider, and due to the delay in her care, the provider determined she needed a liver transplant immediately. AFAHO was able to find a liver for her in 2 months, and her operation was successful. Because of the community screening event, we were able to help save this woman's life. Without it, no one may have tested her for HBV.



The State of Hepatitis B in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, 25,132 people live with chronic HBV (1), and there are about 3,000 new cases of HBV annually (2). On top of that, up to 65% of people living with HBV are unaware of their condition, because many individuals with chronic HBV can have no symptoms for years (1). More than half of those infected with HBV are immigrants and children of immigrants from countries where HBV is endemic (3). These individuals predominantly come from Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa (3). HBUP continues to provide needed HBV education, screening, and advocacy for the thousands living with HBV today.

Discussions with Vietnamese Nail Salon Workers

In collaboration with Drexel College of Public Health and VietLead, a non-profit organization in Philadelphia serving the Vietnamese community, we held interviews and focus groups discussing HBV with Vietnamese nail salon workers. In Philadelphia, about 8-12% of the Vietnamese population lives with HBV. Additionally, nail salons are a significant source of economic support for the refugee Vietnamese population, as Vietnamese people make up 56% of the 439,000 manicurists in the nation.

Nineteen individuals shared their knowledge and experiences. There were patterns demonstrating a lack of knowledge about HBV, barriers to health care access, discrimination, and stigma surrounding HBV in the Vietnamese community.

Many believed that individuals spread HBV by contaminated food and drinks, when HBV can only be transmitted by blood, semen, or vaginal fluids. One individual stated:

"in Vietnam, once had it, mother and father do not live together and separated. The children also separated. Eating and drinking is done separately as well."

Additionally, there were barriers to talk about HBV due to stigma.

"if they have an illness, they often hide it, they will not talk about it,"

After our discussions, we determined five recommendations:

1. Educate cosmetology and nail training schools on the benefits of HBV education.
2. Educate nail salon owners on HBV to motivate protecting their employees.
3. Use Facebook to connect with the Vietnamese nail salon community.
4. Tailor educational material to motivate nail salon workers to talk about HBV.
5. Increase awareness of the benefits of screenings and vaccinations.





Chinese Christian Church Annual Health Fair

Prevent Cancer Foundation Community Health Grant

The African Family Health Organization (AFAHO), HepTREC, and HBUP were awarded a grant from the Prevent Cancer Foundation to educate and screen African immigrant refugees from Philadelphia for hepatitis B and C. Hepatitis B and C are leading causes of liver cancer. Additionally, people of African descent tend to have higher rates of hepatitis B and C and a higher risk of developing liver cancer at younger ages compared to other high-risk populations. In Philadelphia, over the last four years, three African immigrant men under 35 years old died from liver cancer caused by a HBV infection.

Caseworkers from AFAHO educated the community. In total, we reached 719 individuals and tested 157 individuals. Of those tested, 13 were positive for HBV, three were positive for HCV, and two were positive for both hepatitis B and C. Everyone who tested positive was linked to care.

Additionally, half of those screened were not immune to hepatitis B. They were given referrals to FQHCs, community clinics, or providers to receive the hepatitis B vaccine.

AFAHO community workers facilitated trust between the community and ourselves. Therefore, the success of this screening came from working with existing community organizations. The results show there is a great need for more education and testing of hepatitis B and C. For future events, it will be essential to disaggregate and tailor messaging and language resources to different subgroups of the community. Lastly, HBUP needs to educate more healthcare providers and community leaders about the need for HBV education and screening to dispel myths and save lives. Today, there are still limited resources and low prioritization of HBV, but HBUP will continue working with AFAHO and support the African immigrant community.



Screening event at First Haitian Church of God of Philadelphia



Mifflin Square Park, Spit Spreads Death Health Fair

HBV PreVNTT

*Prevention, Vaccination, Navigation,
Testing, Treatment*

In July 2019, HBUP and five organizations alongside the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) received a three-year-long grant from the Office of Minority Health (OMH) to demonstrate city-wide HBV elimination. PDPH and partnering organizations aim to improve city-wide infrastructure (accessibility of adult vaccination and competent care), reduce transmission, reduce deaths attributable to HBV, and lessen the health disparities of those experiencing HBV.

Through the grant, HBUP will continue educating, screening, and linking with culturally competent care to individuals. We will continue working with our partners and prioritize culturally and linguistically competent community-based services. Annually, we aim to vaccinate 250 people, screen 300 individuals, link all people with chronic HBV back to treatment, train 25 providers serving high-risk populations, and link 50% of HBV-positive people from high-risk populations to care.

2019 Health Advisory

PDPH released a health advisory declaring a 175% increase in diagnosed HBV infections in the city (4). Of those diagnosed, more than 70% were people who use drugs (PWUD) and more than 60% were living homeless. We are collaborating with Prevention Point, a non-profit harm reduction organization, to provide HBV education and testing for PWUD in Philadelphia.

Pennsylvania Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan



Existing vaccines and therapies can prevent and manage viral hepatitis, but Pennsylvania has not invested in these resources.

Even without the state-wide infrastructure to manage viral hepatitis, organizations in Pennsylvania have been at the forefront to respond to the viral hepatitis epidemic.

In 2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials gathered over 100 providers, patients, government representatives, and community representatives who were disproportionately affected by viral hepatitis. From this meeting, the Pennsylvania Department of Health helped form a statewide elimination steering committee with members from Allegheny County to Greater Philadelphia. We will continue organizing our grassroots movement and speaking with state senators in the following years to advocate for the statewide viral hepatitis elimination plan.



4. <http://bit.ly/hbvha>

The Future of Hep B United Philadelphia

Hepatitis B has been declared an epidemic in Philadelphia, per the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. It is a silent disease and can go asymptomatic for decades. While HBUP educates, screens, and empowers high-risk populations, such as the African immigrant and AAPI populations, PWUDs have become disproportionately vulnerable for HBV too. Therefore, HBUP will continue its work with our communities in need and mobilize stakeholders to speak up about HBV and work towards elimination.



Hep B United Annual Advocacy Day



Hep B United Philadelphia is a community-owned coalition led by the Hepatitis B Foundation. We aim to: Raise the profile of hepatitis B and liver cancer as an urgent health priority; Promote hepatitis B testing and vaccination; And stimulate community engagement improve access to care for prevention and treatment.
