



HERO PROFILE: MIKE HONDA

NATIONAL LEADER FOR HEP B FREE

As representative for the 15th Congressional District of California, Mike Honda is well aware of the cost that hepatitis B is having on the nation through expensive treatments for liver cancer, hard-to-come-by liver transplants, and the lost productivity to the economy as the disease hits working people in the prime of their careers.

Moreover, with the HBV vaccine so effective it is being hailed as the “anti-liver cancer vaccine,” Honda is also confident that the fight against hepatitis B can be won.

“We’re talking about a disease that is preventable,” says Honda, “and treatable if it’s diagnosed in its early stages. This is about preventing human suffering.”

Recognizing that the tools necessary to stop the spread of hepatitis B and prevent HBV-related deaths were already at doctors’ disposal if only organized properly, Honda embarked on a crusade to increase awareness of the disease among APIs, for whom hepatitis B and liver cancer are the greatest health disparity.

Honda’s first attempt to break the silence surrounding the disease happened in 2006, when the congressman submitted to a hepatitis B test at a public-screening day held in San Francisco.

In 2007, Honda and fellow congressmen from New York and Pennsylvania introduced a resolution to

support the very first National Hepatitis B Awareness Week. The program’s goal was to educate communities across the nation about hepatitis B and promote the benefits of screening, vaccination and early treatment.

“We must educate ourselves and our loved ones about this devastating disease,” he explains. “Testing and vaccination are critical to stemming the tide of this health crisis. And treatments are available. Hepatitis B diagnosis does not have to be a death sentence.”

Later that year, Honda co-wrote a bill calling for the development of a national plan for the prevention, control and medical management of hepatitis B. The bill, the first ever to address hepatitis B at the national level, sought to boost immunization rates nationwide and increase federal funding for hepatitis B research, as well as provide funding for the education of high-risk populations, including Asian Americans.



Be Tested. Be Vaccinated. Be Treated.

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