



Executive Directive 09-05
Hepatitis B Prevention
September 9, 2009

Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). If untreated, HBV can cause acute illness and chronic infection including cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer. Asians and Pacific Islanders (API) are up to 100 times more likely to suffer from chronic HBV infection and four times more likely to die from liver cancer compared with the general population. An estimated 1 in 10 people of API decent in the Bay Area has an undiagnosed HBV infection compared to 1 in 1000 in the general population. Hepatitis B is responsible for 80% of all liver cancers among APIs who have the highest rates of liver cancer for any racial or ethnic group. San Francisco's liver cancer rate is the highest in the nation.

Hepatitis B is easily transmitted – from an infected mother to her child at birth, through unprotected sex or by contaminated blood on shared toothbrushes, razors or needles. People with Hepatitis B often have no symptoms and are not aware they have the virus. Treatments for Hepatitis B can slow or prevent liver damage caused by the disease so testing is essential followed by vaccination.

California law requires County Clerks to provide to all marriage license applicants a booklet titled "Your Future Together". The information regarding Hepatitis B is located on page 37 (of 44 total pages) under the section "During and After Pregnancy" even though Hepatitis B is similar to other illness described in greater detail in other areas of the booklet unrelated to pregnancy.

The prevalence of Hepatitis B in San Francisco's Asian community demands intervention to increase awareness of this vaccine preventable disease. Primary care medical providers and numerous locations provide Hepatitis B testing and vaccinations for free or at a reduced cost.

With this Executive Directive, I direct the City and County of San Francisco County Clerk to offer additional information on Hepatitis B (including testing and vaccination locations) to couples applying for marriage licenses in San Francisco. The information is to be prepared and supplied by the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

For questions concerning this Executive Directive, please contact Catherine Dodd, Deputy Chief of Staff at (415) 554-6502.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom
Mayor