



B Sure, B Tested, B Free

SAN FRANCISCO — "B Sure, B Tested, B Free," is the message the San Francisco Hep B Free Campaign is spreading to encourage all Asian Pacific Islanders to get tested for hepatitis B, a life-threatening disease responsible for 80 percent of all liver cancers among APIs.

On Apr. 25, California Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, San Francisco Supervisor Ed Jew and S.F. Mayor Gavin Newsom led representatives from over 50 healthcare and Asian Pacific Islander organizations to launch the largest healthcare campaign to target APIs in the U.S. at the New Asia Restaurant in San Francisco.

This major collaborative effort brings together city government, private healthcare and nonprofit community organizations in a 2-year-long campaign to screen, vaccinate, and treat all API residents for hepatitis B (HBV).

The campaign will spread its message with media outreach including Asian television, print, and radio as well as mainstream media outlets.

"The hospitals in San Francisco are in full support of educating and providing hepatitis B health access to the Asian and Pacific Islander community," said Brenda Yee, CEO of Chinese Hospital.

Members of the SF Hospital Council and the SF Community Clinic Coalition, the Asian Liver Center, API Wellness Center and others will provide accessible and free or low-cost screenings and vaccinations via physician offices, health clinics and street fairs.

In November 2006, Mayor Newsom signed a resolution authored by then Supervisor Ma establishing the goal of universal HBV screening and vaccination for API residents. The SF Hep B Free Steering Committee was also formed, comprised of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, Asian Liver Center at Stanford University and the AsianWeek Foundation.

On Apr. 24, over 100 people gathered on the steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento to support AB 158, a bill authored by Ma requiring the California Department of Public Health to establish a hepatitis B prevention and management pilot program in the Los Angeles area and the San Francisco Bay Area. The bill is expected to be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee within the next month.

"Many people are unaware that they may be infected with hepatitis B," said Ma. "By raising awareness and directing resources, this bill can end the disproportionate impact the disease has on Asian Americans like me."

Free hepatitis B testing will once again be available at the AsianWeek Foundation's annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration on May 19 at Howard and 5th Streets.

More information can be found at www.SFHepBFree.org or (888) 311-3331.

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