



*California Pacific
Medical Center*

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California Pacific Medical Center Providing Free Hepatitis B Testing at the Asian Heritage Street Celebration

Date: Saturday, May 16

Time: 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Place: Civic Center—McAllister at Larkin

It's estimated that one in 10 Asians in the U.S. have chronic hepatitis B, many don't even know they are at risk; that's why California Pacific Medical Center is offering free hep B testing at one of the largest celebrations of Asian culture in the Bay Area.

Hepatitis B is caused by a virus that infects the liver and can result in liver damage, cancer and early death. Because hepatitis B virus can remain silent inside the body, without any noticeable symptoms, many people do not know they have it until they get tested. Among Asians and Pacific Islanders, hepatitis B is responsible for 80% of all liver cancers. Liver cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in Asian men, and San Francisco has the highest liver cancer rate in the nation.

"This virus is common in the Bay Area due to the high percentage of Asians who live here and the fact that vaccination against the disease didn't become routine in the United States until 1993," says Robert Gish M.D., medical director of California Pacific Medical Center's Liver Disease Management & Transplant Program. "In many cases, mothers with hepatitis B may have passed it to their child without knowing."

Transmission of hepatitis B virus typically occurs from: mother-to-child (from a pregnant woman to her baby), but also occurs from sexual contact, and/or contact with infected blood. Transmission can be prevented by vaccination. Hepatitis B is usually not curable but it is treatable, and can usually be fully controlled. Although a person with hepatitis B may feel healthy, regular examinations are important and should include liver tests, measurement of the amount of virus in blood and periodic screening for liver cancer.

"As part of the San Francisco Hep B Free coalition, California Pacific is pleased to join our partners in the fight to end hep B," says Stewart Cooper, M.D., program director for CPMC's Hep B Free program. "We hope to screen 300 people at the Asian Heritage Street Celebration, which is part of our ultimate goal to screen/vaccinate 10,000 Asian and Pacific Islander residents of San Francisco—thereby preventing further spread of this deadly disease."

"Many doctors do not routinely test their Asian patients for hepatitis B. Even when we offer free testing, as now, many Asians hesitate to get tested. We are not exactly sure why this is. It only takes a small blood sample and up to 30 minutes of your time to get tested at the festival, so it's a very easy thing to do. We have a dedicated team at CPMC and among our city partners, who devote their own time to encouraging,

educating and testing our Asian residents. We are determined to prevent transmission and unnecessary suffering due to this incredibly successful virus.”

California Pacific Medical Center. Beyond Medicine.

At San Francisco’s California Pacific Medical Center, we believe in the power of medicine. We research the most up-to-date treatments, hire the most qualified individuals, and practice the most modern, innovative medicine. We deliver the highest quality expert care, with kindness and compassion, in acute, post-acute and outpatient services, as well as preventive and complementary medicine. But we also believe that medicine alone is only part of the solution. That’s why we look intently at each individual case and treat the whole person, not just the illness. It’s why we go beyond medical care and provide our patients with things like disease counseling, family support and wellness treatments. As one of California’s largest private, community-based, not-for-profit, teaching medical centers, and a Sutter Health affiliate, we are able to reach deep into our community to provide education, screening and financial support in some of the city’s most underserved neighborhoods. Medicine can transform a body. But going beyond medicine can transform a life. www.cpmc.org

The SF Hep B Free Campaign (<http://sfhepbfree.org/>) is a ‘first-in-the-nation’ effort calling on the collaboration of a wide spectrum of organizations to educate the public about the health risks of the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and to promote routine HBV screenings and vaccinations for the city’s Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population.###