



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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**KAISER PERMANENTE HAWAI'I AWARDS \$40,000 TO STATE'S
HEPATITIS EDUCATION EFFORTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HEP FREE
HAWAI'I**



HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) recently received a \$40,350 grant from Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i to help with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis.

“Hepatitis B and C are truly silent epidemics because most people don't know that they have been infected with hepatitis. There may not be any symptoms for many years, and there is still

(more)

limited awareness about hepatitis,” said Thaddeus Pham, DOH Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator. “This is especially true for foreign-born Asian and Pacific Islander communities who may not have access to culturally appropriate, in-language materials about viral hepatitis.”

It is estimated that 1 out of 10 Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States have hepatitis B, compared to 1 out of 1,000 in the general U.S. population. Since more than half of the people living in Hawai‘i are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent according to the 2010 U.S. Census, this means the burden of hepatitis in Hawai‘i is especially high. According to DOH estimates, 1 to 3 percent of people in Hawai‘i have hepatitis B, and approximately 23,000 are living with hepatitis C. Hepatitis B and C are the most common known causes of liver cancer in Hawai‘i, and Hawai‘i has the highest rate of liver cancer in the country.

In partnership with Hep Free Hawai‘i, the DOH will use the grant to raise awareness about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis and liver disease in Hawai‘i using culturally sensitive and in-language materials. The creation of these materials will be a collaborative effort with community groups representing many Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicities including Chuukese and Marshallese. By partnering with the community and organizations such as the Micronesian Community Network, it is expected that the grant will help educate more than 25,000 people in the first year.

“Hawai‘i is such a beautiful and diverse place,” Pham said. “With this grant, DOH and Hep Free Hawai‘i intend to make sure that all of the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander communities in the state can obtain relevant and appropriate materials to increase their awareness of and access to hepatitis education and services.”

More information on hepatitis B and C is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis, or by calling 1-888-443-7232. For more information about hepatitis resources in Hawai‘i, go to www.hepfreehawaii.org.

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