



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFERS FREE IN-LANGUAGE
HEPATITIS B EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH HEP FREE HAWAII**



HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is offering free in-language health educational materials to distribute among Chuukese, Marshallese, Samoan, Tongan, and Ilocano communities. Thanks to a grant from Kaiser Permanente Hawaii, the materials were developed in collaboration with partner agencies and community groups to increase hepatitis B awareness, prevention, immunization, and treatment among Asians and Pacific Islanders.

“Hepatitis B and C are truly silent epidemics because most people don’t know that they have been infected with hepatitis,” said Thaddeus Pham, DOH Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator. “There may not be any symptoms for many years, and there is still limited

(more)

awareness about hepatitis. 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.”

In partnership with Hep Free Hawaii, the DOH developed culturally sensitive and in-language materials to raise awareness about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of viral hepatitis and liver disease in Hawaii. The creation of these materials was a collaborative effort with community groups representing many Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicities including Chuukese and Marshallese. With strong partnerships with organizations such as the Micronesian Community Network and community feedback, it is estimated the grant from Kaiser Permanente Hawaii will benefit at least 25,000 people in the first year of distribution.

“Hawaii is such a beautiful and diverse place,” said Pham. “With this grant, DOH and Hep Free Hawaii can ensure 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.”

It is estimated that one out of 10 Asians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. have hepatitis B, compared to one out of 1,000 in the general U.S. population. Since more than half of the people living in Hawaii are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent according to the 2010 U.S. Census, this means the burden of hepatitis in Hawaii is very high. According to DOH estimates, 1 to 3 percent of people in Hawaii 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 the state, and Hawaii has the highest rate of liver cancer in the country.

To download the in-language materials for free, go to www.hepfreehawaii.org. Printed copies are also available in limited quantities by contacting Thaddeus Pham at thaddeus.pham@doh.hawaii.gov.

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