



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **VIRAL HEPATITIS SYMPOSIUM TO ADDRESS INCREASING BURDEN OF TREATABLE DISEASE IN HAWAII**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) in partnership with the Hepatitis Support Network of Hawaii, Hep Free Hawaii, and other local agencies will address the changing state of hepatitis treatment and care in Hawaii at a symposium entitled, “Viral Hepatitis Hawaii – Update 2013” on Saturday, Nov. 16 at the Queen’s Conference Center from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. This educational conference for medical professionals, social service providers, and community members will include updates from local and national experts about hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment, hepatitis during pregnancy, new drug therapies and research from the annual meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, and more.

“As more effective hepatitis treatments become available and as more people get access to affordable insurance, it is important that both the general public and the medical community in Hawaii become aware of the possibility to treat hepatitis B and even cure hepatitis C,” said Thaddeus Pham, DOH viral hepatitis prevention coordinator and conference planning committee member. “This symposium will provide an opportunity for the medical community and other participants to increase their knowledge and awareness about how this disease affects our ohana and what we can do about it.”

The symposium will include auditorium and smaller breakout sessions, exhibits, continental breakfast and lunch (brochure attached). Category 1 CME credit is available for physicians from the Hawaii Consortium for Continuing Medical Education. Additionally, continuing education units have been approved by the National Association for Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, State of Hawaii. Online registration is available at [www.virahhephi.org](http://www.virahhephi.org).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that more than 75 percent of adults living with hepatitis C are baby boomers born from 1945-1965. The CDC estimates that by screening and successfully treating baby boomers, over 121,000 deaths may be averted nationwide. According to DOH Immunization Branch estimates, approximately 23,000 people in Hawaii are living with hepatitis C, and 1 to 3 percent of people in Hawaii have hepatitis B. Hepatitis B and C are the most common causes of liver cancer in Hawaii, and Hawaii has the highest rate of liver cancer in the U.S.

More information on hepatitis B and C is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis), or by calling 1-888-443-7232.

For local resources and information on hepatitis in general, individuals may call Aloha United Way 211 or go to [www.hepfreehawaii.org](http://www.hepfreehawaii.org)

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