

On 28 July 2012, the World Hepatitis Alliance will coordinate the fifth global World Hepatitis Day. World Hepatitis Day is one of only four official world disease awareness days endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and its 194 member states. The aim for 2012 is to continue to raise awareness of chronic hepatitis B and C around the globe and to drive policy change for improvements in health outcomes for patients.

## Why is it important to address hepatitis?

Approximately 500 million people worldwide are living with either hepatitis B or hepatitis C. This represents 1 in 12 people, yet awareness remains inexplicably low. If left untreated and unmanaged, hepatitis B or C can lead to advanced liver scarring (cirrhosis) and other complications, including liver cancer or liver failure. Together, hepatitis B and C kill approximately one million people every year.<sup>1</sup>

## How did World Hepatitis Day start?

World Hepatitis Day was launched by the World Hepatitis Alliance in 2008 in response to the concern that chronic viral hepatitis did not have the level of awareness, nor the political momentum, seen with other communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This is despite the fact that the number of people chronically infected with, and the number of deaths caused by, hepatitis B and C is on the same scale as these conditions. World Hepatitis Day has generated massive public and media interest, as well as support from governments, high-profile Non-Governmental Organisations and supranational bodies, such as WHO. To date, thousands of events have taken place around the world, from rock concerts and press briefings to ministerial meetings and fundraising events.



WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, addresses the Sixty-third World Health Assembly. WHO

## Working with WHO

In May 2010, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution on viral hepatitis which, together with vital commitments on prevention, treatment and patient care, made World Hepatitis Day an official WHO awareness day. Each year WHO works with the Alliance as a collaborating partner on WHD. World Hepatitis Day takes place on 28 July every year, in recognition of the birthday of Professor Baruch Blumberg, who won the Nobel Prize for discovering the hepatitis B virus.

## World Hepatitis Day 2012 – It's Closer Than You Think

The 2012 theme for World Hepatitis Day is **'This is hepatitis... it's closer than you think'**. The theme builds on the previous year's campaign theme **'This is hepatitis... Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere.'** The theme aims to highlight the global prevalence of hepatitis and help combat stigma often associated with hepatitis B and C by conveying the fact that these viruses do not discriminate by age, gender or race. A variety of events and initiatives will be coordinated around the world to recognise World Hepatitis Day 2012 in line with the global campaign theme.

### Guinness World Record

**Record title:** the most people performing the "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" actions in 24 hours at multiple venues around the world.

**Record Timings:** Each record attempt will take place within 12 hours either side of 12.00 UCT+1 (London UK time)

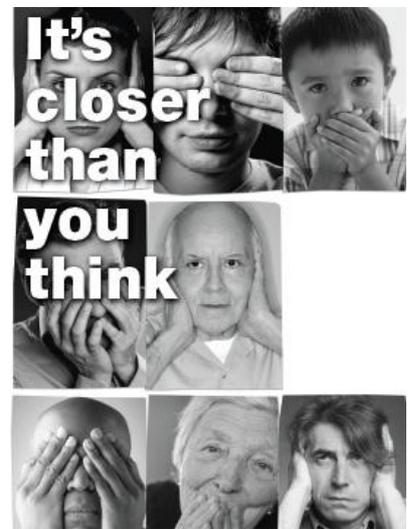
**Record theme:** The "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" actions relate to a proverb known as the three wise monkeys. These monkeys are Mizaru, covering his eyes, who sees no evil; Kikazaru, covering his ears, who hears no evil; and Iwazaru, covering his mouth, who speaks no evil. There are many meanings attached to the proverb, but mostly it is used to refer to those who deal with problems by refusing to acknowledge them. This theme has been chosen to highlight that around the world hepatitis is being ignored.

Countries participating in the record attempt include:

Germany, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Malaysia, India, Romania, China, Ukraine, Canada and Japan.

*"The record attempt is about setting a seemingly impossible goal and showing the determination to achieve it. Anyone can identify with a record attempt, no matter where they're from, what language they speak, or how old they are. Through the event we aim to mobilise the community to show governments and opinion leaders across the world that those fighting against hepatitis have a powerful voice."*

**Charles Gore, President of the World Hepatitis Alliance**



### Social Media



The World Hepatitis Day Facebook app aims to communicate the messaging **'It's Closer Than You Think'** to Facebook users across the world. The app comprises a jigsaw with 12 connected pieces. When users click on the app, the jigsaw becomes populated with the profile pictures of the user and the ten people the user most commonly interacts with. The twelfth jigsaw piece is left empty, highlighting the

message that 1 in 12 people have hepatitis B or C.

Visit the Alliance's Facebook page to use the app and to keep up to date with the global World Hepatitis Day initiatives: <http://www.facebook.com/worldhepalliance>

You can also follow the social media conversation via the Alliance's twitter page (@hep\_alliance) and #closerthanyouthink

## Campaign video

The campaign video conveys the story of everyday people whose lives come together in the busy environment of a city street. Above street level a grand piano is being lifted beside a building whilst people pass by underneath, largely unaware of the danger posed by the piano as the rope lifting it begins to weaken. This video reflects the largely ignored and silent nature of hepatitis through the metaphor of the piano, whilst highlighting the campaign messaging 'It's Closer Than You Think'.

View the video via the Alliance's YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/worldhepday](http://www.youtube.com/worldhepday)



## SMS Campaign

In developing nations, where access to communication devices such as smartphones or the internet is more limited, the Alliance is disseminating the message through SMS text messages. This year blanket SMS text messages are being sent out in Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa with information about World Hepatitis Day and the need to get tested for hepatitis.

## Beyond raising awareness: the '12 Asks'

Although raising awareness is vitally important, the scope of World Hepatitis Day goes even further. The World Hepatitis Alliance has developed a wide-ranging integrated campaign, including initiatives focused on driving policy change at both an international and national level. The '12 Asks' to governments are a central element of the campaign and set out key elements that should be incorporated into national strategies to ensure improvements in health outcomes for patients. All governments are being asked to sign up to the '12 Asks'.

## Will one day change the world?

The World Hepatitis Alliance recognises that one day will not change the world. World Hepatitis Day is a stepping stone that focuses first on raising global awareness and then on securing international and national support for improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support for people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C and those at risk of becoming infected.

## What is the World Hepatitis Alliance?

The World Hepatitis Alliance is a Non-Governmental Organisation established in 2007, working with over 280 chronic hepatitis B and C patient groups around the world. As a coalition of advocacy groups, the World Hepatitis Alliance is a global voice for the 500 million people worldwide living with chronic hepatitis B or C. The aim of the World Hepatitis Alliance is to provide global leadership and support action that will halt the death toll and improve the lives of people living with chronic hepatitis B and C. The World Hepatitis Alliance works with governments to increase awareness and access to treatment as well as to improve prevention, care and support, with the ultimate goal of eradicating these diseases from the planet. The World Hepatitis Alliance is governed by a board consisting entirely of hepatitis B or C patients and elected by patient groups from the 6 WHO world regions: Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa, the Americas, South-East Asia and Western Pacific.

**World Hepatitis Alliance** – seeking a world without viral hepatitis B and C.

## Where does World Hepatitis Day take place?

World Hepatitis Day is a global initiative and should take place in every country. All 194 Member States of WHO committed themselves to marking World Hepatitis Day when they adopted World Health Assembly 63 Resolution 18 which calls on WHO to provide support for the Day for those countries needing it. WHO has also sent out suggestions for marking the day through its Regional and Country Offices.

## For more information

For more information on the theme for the 2012 campaign please take a look at our websites - [www.worldhepatitisalliance.org](http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org) or [www.worldhepatitisday.info](http://www.worldhepatitisday.info)

If you have any questions please email the World Hepatitis Alliance at [contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

## Reference

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Viral hepatitis: Report by the Secretariat. [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB126/B126\\_15-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB126/B126_15-en.pdf)