



This is hepatitis...



# Welcome to Issue 04 of the World Hepatitis Alliance Newsletter World Hepatitis Day 2010

## Important Steps Forward

The World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA) has made significant progress this past month. In particular, after much lobbying from the WHA and patient groups around the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board (EB) has recommended a resolution on viral hepatitis to the World Health Assembly.

Since the last update, the WHA has corresponded with numerous individuals, eager to share their personal experiences with viral hepatitis as part of the new global website and blog. The WHA would like to thank all those who have submitted their details. Applications are being processed and candidates will be contacted in due course.

By now, you should have received the 2010 World Hepatitis Day posters and postcards. The WHA would be

delighted to know how you intend to use these materials. Please email your board member with photos and information.

With only three months to go until 19 May, the WHA knows that your planning efforts will be well under way. To provide some inspiration, the WHA has included tips and ideas for events that you might like to consider as part of your World Hepatitis Day media campaign (see page two for more information).



## WHO EB Agrees Resolution on Viral Hepatitis

In a major breakthrough following extensive lobbying from the WHA and patient groups, the 34 member states of the WHO EB have recommended a resolution on viral hepatitis to the World Health Assembly in May.

Proposed by Brazil and co-sponsored by Indonesia and Colombia, the resolution gives global support to an official World Hepatitis Day to provide a focus for national and international awareness-raising efforts. The agreement of a resolution is a huge success for patient groups who have worked tirelessly to increase awareness and improve the lives of the people living with hepatitis B and C around the world.

Discussion of viral hepatitis at last year's World Health Assembly was postponed because of the H1N1 outbreak. Now, the resolution will be debated by the 193 WHO member states at the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly, due to take place in Geneva from Monday 17 – Friday 21 May, 2010. There is a good chance that the resolution will be discussed on World Hepatitis Day itself.

Its adoption by the Assembly would:

- Provide a clear statement that viral hepatitis is now a global priority and has to be tackled globally

- Generate considerable funding for WHO activity to coordinate responses to viral hepatitis at a global level
- Represent a clear commitment by governments to strengthen their response to viral hepatitis, which patient groups would then be able to use to encourage changes in policy and practice at a national level

**Charles Gore**, President of the WHA, made a direct appeal to delegates at the EB meeting in Geneva, explaining that he was speaking on behalf of hundreds of patient groups and the 500 million people living with hepatitis B and C:

*"Today we ask you to demonstrate the collective will required to halt the death toll...Viral hepatitis does not respect national borders; does not discriminate between races; and it does not recognise the potential of a newborn child. The World Hepatitis Alliance is asking for a resolution on viral hepatitis that explicitly recognises the need for action...a resolution that will deliver results. We ask this as the people affected by these diseases, as your constituents, as your citizens. We are one twelfth of the world's population."*

In a change to the original text, the draft resolution now proposes marking World Hepatitis Day on 28 July, Baruch Blumberg's birthday. However, as with the rest of the resolution, this requires agreement by the World Health Assembly and that cannot happen before May. World Hepatitis Day 2010 will therefore be going ahead as planned on 19 May.

As the date of the World Health Assembly approaches, the WHA will be emphasising to all delegates the important role World Hepatitis Day plays in providing a focus for disease control strategies and awareness-raising. Over the past three years, the hepatitis community has greatly increased the profile of World Hepatitis Day and the resolution is an opportunity to take this profile to new levels, encouraging WHO and government engagement in activities around the world.

The WHA will be continuing its discussions with the WHO and member states to ensure a positive outcome at the World Health Assembly and will be contacting all member groups shortly with more information on how they can contribute and make a difference.

### News for Regional Updates

With only three months to go until 19 May, the WHA wants to know what plans you have in place. Please email your board member with information so that others in your region can learn from your great work.

### Issue 05 of the WHA Newsletter

If you would like to be included in an upcoming edition of the newsletter, please do get in touch. Issue 05 of the WHA newsletter will be made available in the run-up to World Hepatitis Day 2010.





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# World Hepatitis Day 2010

## Planning an Event for World Hepatitis Day?

Since 2008, over 600 events have been organised around World Hepatitis Day, bringing thousands of people together in the fight against viral hepatitis.

The media are key to promoting World Hepatitis Day as well as raising awareness. The media are more likely to attend your event if you:

- Invite journalists as soon as your event is organised and send a reminder a few days before
- Tie your event into other news if possible. This year you can use the debate on the resolution at the World Health Assembly as a news 'hook'
- Get photographers on board or set up a photo opportunity for journalists – journalists may be more interested in covering your event if they have a picture to accompany their story
- Encourage radio and TV stations to come and cover events – news programmes may be particularly interested if you have local celebrities on board and medical professionals available for interviews



- Issue press releases announcing your event – let journalists know what will be happening and who is involved. If you need guidance on press release development, there are examples in the World Hepatitis Day toolkit

You can find more tips and ideas in the World Hepatitis Day toolkit, which you will receive shortly. And, of course, do not forget to share your plans at [contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

## Under the Spotlight

**This month, Emilia Rodrigues shares what SOS Hepatitis Portugal has been doing to raise the profile of viral hepatitis.**

### What have you been doing recently?

We are currently running an awareness campaign that targets young people. As part of this campaign, we have been visiting schools to demystify hepatitis.

### How did you mark World Hepatitis Day 2009?

SOS Hepatitis Portugal coordinated 'Am I Number 12?' building projections in four cities: Chaves, Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon. In two of these cities, the projection campaign included coffins that carried a banner that read:

"Coffin – courtesy of funeral directors  
Dead body – courtesy of lack of testing!  
Do you know if you have hepatitis?  
Get tested!"

### What does viral hepatitis mean to you?

Viral hepatitis is the biggest problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### How can the WHA help you?

By including us in the 'This is hepatitis...' campaign...our voice will be stronger if we act together.

### What one piece of advice would you give other patient groups around the world?

Publicise, publicise! It is only through alerting the public and raising awareness of viral hepatitis

that we can help reduce the number of hepatitis cases that progress to cirrhosis.

### What are your plans for 19 May, 2010?

Our plan is to conduct testing in the streets and engage in awareness-raising campaigns.

### What awareness-raising campaigns have really inspired you?

On a global level, the 'Am I Number 12?' campaign has been really inspiring. At a national level, campaigns that build on the existing interest of young people are always inspiring.



## Regional Support Coordinators

- Africa/Eastern Mediterranean  
[africa@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:africa@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- Australasia  
[australasia@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:australasia@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- Europe  
[europe@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:europe@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- Latin America  
[latinamerica@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:latinamerica@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- North America  
[northamerica@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:northamerica@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- South East Asia  
[southeastasia@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:southeastasia@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- Western Pacific  
[westernpacific@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:westernpacific@worldhepatitisalliance.org)
- Not in your region? Please contact [contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

## World Hepatitis Alliance

**President**  
Charles Gore  
The Hepatitis C Trust  
(United Kingdom)  
[charles.gore@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:charles.gore@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

**Africa/Eastern Mediterranean**  
Abdelhamid Bouallag  
SOS Hépatites  
(Algeria)  
[hamidboualleg@yahoo.fr](mailto:hamidboualleg@yahoo.fr)

**Europe**  
Achim Kautz  
Deutsche Leberhilfe  
(Germany)  
[akautz@leberhilfe.org](mailto:akautz@leberhilfe.org)

**North America**  
Chris Taylor  
NASTAD  
(USA)  
[ctaylor@nastad.org](mailto:ctaylor@nastad.org)

**Australasia**  
Helen Tyrrell  
Hepatitis Australia  
(Australia)  
[helen@hepatitisaustralia.com](mailto:helen@hepatitisaustralia.com)

**Latin America**  
Raquel José  
Non-Executive and Interim  
World Hepatitis Alliance  
[raquel.jose@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:raquel.jose@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

**Western Pacific**  
Zhao Wang  
Chinese Foundation for  
Hepatitis Prevention & Control  
(China)  
[wz@cfhpc.org](mailto:wz@cfhpc.org)



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