



Cal Hep B Free

First university in the U.S. to address the high incidence of HBV among ethnic minorities.

Contact: Denis Lam
Cal Hep B Free Media Contact
Tel: (408) 887-2870
Email: denis@teamhbv.org

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CAL HEP B FREE CAMPAIGN: B SMART, B TESTED, B FREE!

Berkeley Students Launch Unprecedented Campaign to Address a Silent Global Health Crisis

BERKELEY (September 9, 2008) – The Associated Students at the University of California, Berkeley (ASUC), the ASUC Auxiliary, and Team HBV will lead representatives from over 50 student organizations to launch the first **Cal Hep B Free Campaign** on September 15, 2008, 11am at the Tang Center Class of '42 Room (1st Floor) 2222 Bancroft Way, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.

The major student-initiated campaign effort brings together university students, faculty, and administration at UC Berkeley in an effort to screen, vaccinate, and treat high-risk ethnic groups, particularly individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander (API), Middle Eastern, Eastern European, Russian, and African descent for hepatitis B (HBV). The Cal Hep B Free campaign will allow UC Berkeley to join San Francisco Hep B Free, the largest healthcare campaign in the U.S. to target APIs in the U.S., at the forefront of America in fighting chronic hepatitis B.

HBV is the world's second leading viral cause of cancer even though it can be completely preventable and easily identified by a simple blood test. UC Berkeley's APIs comprise over 40% of the university's undergraduate student population and bear a disproportionate burden of liver cancer and undetected HBV infection. **The Greater San Francisco Bay Area has the highest liver cancer rate in the nation.** It is estimated that 1 in 10 people in the API community have an undiagnosed infection. **APIs are up to 100 times more likely to suffer from chronic HBV infection and 4 times more likely to die from liver cancer compared with the general population.**

"Hepatitis B is a highly infectious disease that is often transmitted from mother-to-child at birth or early childhood among individuals from high-risk ethnic communities," said **Denis Lam** (B.S. '07 BioE), Founder of Team HBV at UC Berkeley. "While vaccinations have been a crucial public health strategy to combat the epidemic, vaccination alone is insufficient. Many new students are required to show proof of vaccination before they can enroll; however, most do not realize that vaccines are ineffective for

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those chronically infected. Screening is necessary to detect the disease so that chronically infected individuals can get access to medical care and treatment before it's too late."

In Spring 2008, resolution SB 97 co-authored by ASUC Senators Duong, Louie, Seaty, Shen, Wong, and President Nguyen passed unanimously, establishing the goal of promoting hepatitis B prevention and awareness at UC Berkeley through grassroots efforts. "We are proud to help lead this campaign as a representative for ASUC because it focuses on uniting students, faculty, and administration on a diverse campus to address a worthy cause," said **Senator Tu Tran** (B.S./B.A. '10 BioE/Rhetoric) and **Senator Stephanie Yang** (B.A. '10 Public Health). "Solidarity is key to getting the message of awareness and prevention across to all members of the UC Berkeley community."

The Cal Hep B Free campaign will spread its message of **B smart, B tested, B free!** with media outreach including online video, website, print, campus media outlets, as well as promotional activities such as a *Hep B Awareness Week*, a *\$1,000 Challenge* that rewards that recruit the most peers to get tested, and the *Rock the Jade: California Hep B Free Tour* benefit concert with **Assemblywoman Fiona Ma** (September 16, 7:30pm at Bear's Lair featuring East Bay rock band *Dizzy Balloon* and St. Louis hip-hop artists Jason Hill and Ms. Bee), and the *Hep B and the Medical Career Teach-In* (September 17, 7:00pm). Moreover, to promote screenings, Cal Hep B Free will reimburse the first 1,000 students that get screened at the Tang Center, the University's health clinic. API Wellness Center in Oakland and San Francisco Hep B Free partners will also provide accessible and free or low-cost screenings via physician offices and health clinics. "We are enthusiastic to support the campaign," said **Dr. Brad Buchman**, Medical Director, University Health Services. "Tang Center looks forward to offer its services to all Cal students that would like to be screened for hepatitis B."

Cal Hep B Free plans to expand its campaign beyond the campus in the near future to reach out to high-risk ethnic communities in the East Bay. "Students at Cal have, for decades, been champions of grassroots campaigns and models of social change," said Cal Hep B Free Advisory Board Member **Elaine Dang** (B.A. '09 ORMS/Mass Comm.), who's currently working closely with City of Berkeley Public Health Division to develop a case to present to the Berkeley City Council later this year. "There's still a long way to go, but I'm excited to contribute to a movement that may very well result in the eradication of the next global epidemic since smallpox."