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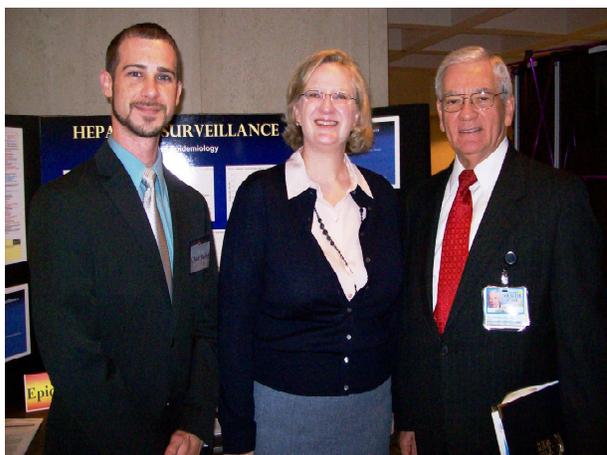
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## Hepatitis Awareness Day at the Capitol

On February 15, 2012, the Hepatitis Prevention Program sponsored Hepatitis Awareness Day at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee. The third floor rotunda of the Capitol was full of activity as partners from other public health programs and community-based organizations provided information to the myriad of people who passed through the area from 9:00am till 12:00pm.



L to R: Chad Bailey & Mary Hilton, Bureau of EPI, with Surgeon General Dr. Frank Farmer, Jr.



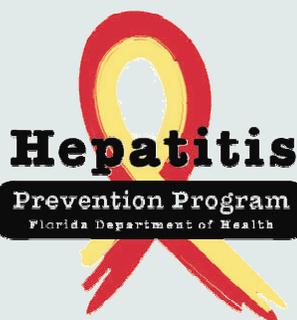
Cristina Dusek, Perinatal Hepatitis B Program in the Bureau of Immunization



L to R: Mary Correia, Cyrus Hansberry and Kiara Douglas with Big Bend Cares



Pam Langford from Hepatitis Education Awareness and Liver Support (HEALS) of the South



## New Hepatitis C Helpline: One Call—Lots of Help



A new national helpline, 877-HELP-4-HEP (877-435-7443), for people affected by hepatitis C was unveiled on February 1, 2012, by the Support Partnership. Specially trained peer counselors help callers navigate screening, diagnosis, medical evaluation, and treatment. Follow-up contacts keep callers engaged throughout their journey to help them follow through with hepatitis C related decisions.

This hotline promises **“One Call—Lots of Help.”** Additional HELP-4-HEP assets include an up-to-date national database of 25,000 referral resources and a secure shared caller database for counseling continuity.

HELP-4-HEP is administered by The Support Partnership, a collaboration among five national nonprofits with a combined 90 years experience in phone-based peer counseling. It operates Monday through Friday 9:00am to 7:00pm EST. To learn more, visit [www.help4hep.org](http://www.help4hep.org) or email [info@help4hep.org](mailto:info@help4hep.org).

the **support** partnership



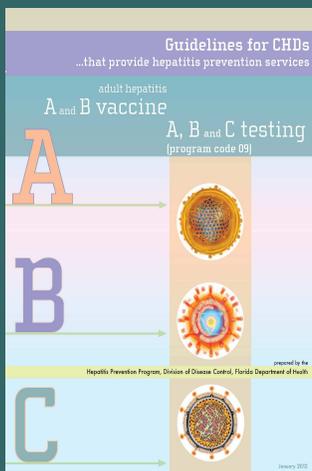
## Welcome to Tune In to Hep C

Several musicians have joined forces to raise awareness about hepatitis C through a crusade called “Tune In to Hep C.”

**Gregg Allman** and **Natalie Cole’s** personal experiences of being infected with this disease inspired them to share their stories and motivate others to tell friends and family about their diagnosis and to talk to their healthcare provider about their options.

**Jon Secada** wants others to know — “You can’t stay silent with a silent disease.” Jon’s father, José, passed away in 2011 from cirrhosis of the liver. It was the result of a complication from chronic hepatitis C infection that went untreated.

They invite you to take a look around their website: <http://www.tuneintohepc.com/>



## Updated Guidelines for CHDS

We have updated our guidelines for county health departments (CHDs) that provide hepatitis prevention services. Also known as “The Tri-Fold,” it shows who is eligible for free testing and vaccine, and includes a risk assessment form, viral hepatitis facts, services and codes.

Jessi Embleton, Office Manager for the Hepatitis Prevention Program, is shipping the new Tri-Folds to all 67 county health departments. If you would like extra copies, please contact Jessi at: 850-245-4139 or [jessi\\_embleton@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:jessi_embleton@doh.state.fl.us). You can also print out a copy at:

[http://flahepatitis.orgTesting\\_Guidelines\\_Trifold.pdf](http://flahepatitis.orgTesting_Guidelines_Trifold.pdf)



## Highlights in Hepatitis for 2011

By Phil Reichert

February 2011: OraSure Technologies received approval from the Food and Drug Administration to market a rapid hepatitis C test that requires only a finger-stick and provides a result in about twenty minutes.

March 11: Hepatitis Foundation International sponsored the Florida Hepatitis Summit in Tampa, which provided CEUs to nurses. There were over forty participants.

March 17: Hepatitis Awareness Day at the Capitol was held in conjunction with National Native American HIV Awareness Day on the third floor rotunda. More than twenty displays provided information and educational materials to the hundreds of people who passed through that part of the Capitol.

April 4: Dr. Frank Farmer, Jr., assumed his position as surgeon general and secretary for the Florida Department of Health.

April 5: Dr. Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus and was instrumental in the development of the hepatitis B vaccine, passed away in California at the age of 85.

April 14: The Hepatitis Prevention Program participated in Minority Health Education Day at the Capitol.

May: The Food and Drug Administration approved two new treatments for hepatitis C. Both are used along with the current standard of treatment, pegylated interferon and ribavirin. Both increase treatment success significantly. For more information, Google "boceprevir" and "telaprevir."

May 12: The US Department of Health and Human Services released the comprehensive multi-agency and program hepatitis action plan titled, *Combating the Silent Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis: Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis*. For the entire report, go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hepatitis>.

June 4-5: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) co-sponsored the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) Conference in Atlanta.

June 5-6: CDC sponsored an Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator (AVHPC) meeting, which followed the AASLD conference.

July 28: World Hepatitis Day was observed with events all around Florida, including a statewide media event at the Broward Public Library in Ft. Lauderdale. Several news stories resulted and were reported in newspapers, the Internet, and on radio and television. For pictures, go to: [http://www.flahepatitis.org/WHD\\_Photos\\_2011B.pdf](http://www.flahepatitis.org/WHD_Photos_2011B.pdf).

August 4: European scientists successfully tested a hepatitis C vaccine in animals. Human trials may begin as early as 2012.

August 23-24: The CDC hosted a consultation to help develop updated guidelines for hepatitis C screening. Their last guidance on this topic was published in the late 1990s. The new guidance will involve screening all Americans born from 1945-1965. According to CDC, 75% of all hepatitis C infections in the US occur in this population.

September 29: The Hepatitis Prevention Program provided the first in a series of Serology and Hepatitis Lab Interpretation webinars via WebEx.

October 17-19: The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) hosted the Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator (AVHPC) and National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) meetings in Washington, DC. Presenters included Dr. John Ward, Director of CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis, Dr. Ron Valdiserri, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health at HHS, Lorren Sandt, Director of the Hepatitis C Caring Ambassadors Program and singer Natalie Cole, who was diagnosed with and treated for hepatitis C.

November 3: Representative Mike Honda (California) and Senator John Kerry (Massachusetts) introduced the "Viral Hepatitis Testing Act of 2011" in each house of Congress. If passed and funded, this bill would increase awareness of viral hepatitis, coordinate treatment and counseling services as well as provide for other hepatitis-related services.

## The Hepatitis Prevention Program in 2012

By Phil Reichert



Phil Reichert

In September of 2011, the Hepatitis Prevention Program (HPP) began offering the Viral Hepatitis Serology Workshop. This two-hour webinar offers information on hepatitis laboratory testing and how to interpret test results. It provides participating nurses with two CEUs. All participants who successfully complete the pre- and post-tests receive a certificate of completion. This webinar will be offered throughout 2012.

Hepatitis 101 training, provided by HPP Educational Coordinator April Crowley, is a one-hour class that will be offered bimonthly in 2012. This training, which is highly rated based on evaluation feedback, is usually offered on the second Tuesday of each month from 2:00-3:00 PM. You may also find information on the next Hepatitis 101 class and how to register at [www.FlaHepatitis.org](http://www.FlaHepatitis.org).

The HPP planned the 2012 Hepatitis Awareness Day at the Capitol event. The HPP, with over 15 partners, provided educational and informational displays on the third floor rotunda of the Capitol on February 15. Each year, hundreds of people stop to check out the displays during the legislative session.

The Florida Public Health Association (FPHA) is planning a regional educational conference in Fort Lauderdale for April 27 and 28, 2012. There will be two tracks of interest for attendees: childhood immunization and viral hepatitis. Intended audiences will not only be public health professionals, but private-sector doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. The FPHA plans to offer nurse CEUs and physician CMEs. For updated information on this educational opportunity, check out [www.fpha.org](http://www.fpha.org).

In addition to Hepatitis Awareness Month in May, National Hepatitis Testing Awareness Day will occur on May 19, 2012. This is an opportunity to promote the fact that individuals at risk should visit their doctor and ask to be tested for viral hepatitis.

World Hepatitis Day (WHD) will be observed on July 28 (to commemorate the birth and life of Dr. Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus and was instrumental in the development of the vaccine). The HPP plans to develop and disseminate a statewide press release. For downloadable materials and more information on WHD, go to [www.worldhepatitisalliance.org](http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org).

The HPP is working with Hepatitis Foundation International on a viral hepatitis summit for healthcare workers. It is tentatively scheduled for November 16, 2012, in Orlando.

With the travel restrictions and budget reductions of recent years, quality improvement (QI) visits to county health departments (CHD) have been less frequent. Generally, the QI process is most often done via a CHD self-assessment form. Limited site visits continue to occur.

Technical assistance and training (TAT) site visits are still done at the request of the CHD or community-based organization, pending travel approval. Part of the 2011-2015 HPP goals and objectives are to make four to six TAT site visits per year.

The staff of the HPP will continue to seek opportunities to provide information on viral hepatitis at different venues. We will continue to stay in touch and encourage everyone to contact us if you need assistance from us.

Thank you all for your hard work in difficult times and for your continued interest in viral hepatitis prevention.

## ACIP Recommends Hepatitis B Vaccination for Diabetics

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices published the following recommendations on vaccination in *MMWR*, December 23, 2011 / 60(50);1709-1711:

Patients aged 19 to 59 years diagnosed with diabetes (types 1 and 2) who have not been previously vaccinated against hepatitis B should be vaccinated as soon as possible after their diagnosis. Those aged 60 and older may be vaccinated at their clinician's discretion.

## National Hepatitis Testing Day

To decrease the burden of chronic viral hepatitis, CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis is developing a national education campaign called **Know More Hepatitis**. The initiative is aimed at increasing awareness about this hidden epidemic and encouraging people at risk to get tested.

CDC's **Know More Hepatitis** campaign was officially announced on World Hepatitis Day, July 28th, 2011 at a special White House event to release the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' *Combating the Silent Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis: Action Plan for the Prevention, Care & Treatment of Viral Hepatitis*. The plan calls for a national campaign to educate people about viral hepatitis and encourage people to get tested. As part of this educational initiative, May 19th has been designated as **National Hepatitis Testing Day** in the United States.

The CDC will use the first ever **Hepatitis Testing Day** on May 19, 2012 as an opportunity to remind health care providers and the public who should be tested for chronic viral hepatitis. Millions of Americans have chronic viral hepatitis. Most of them do not know they are infected.



## National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day

By Guillermo Chacón, President, Latino Commission on AIDS

The first ever **National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day will be held on May 15, 2012**. This effort will be spearheaded and coordinated by the Latino Commission on AIDS in conjunction with the Latino Health Advocacy Coalition. With this initiative, we reaffirm our commitment to increasing our education, advocacy and community mobilization efforts around hepatitis in order to empower patients and to achieve healthier communities.



Guillermo Chacón

This innovative effort is the direct result of identified gaps in services targeting Hispanics. Over the last two years the Commission has been asked to do more in the emerging arena of hepatitis overall.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 212-584-9304 or via email: [gchacon@latinoaids.org](mailto:gchacon@latinoaids.org).

*Hepatitis Health* is brought to you by the Hepatitis Prevention Program, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, Division of Disease Control, at the Florida Department of Health. Submit your articles and photos to: [April\\_Crowley@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:April_Crowley@doh.state.fl.us)

# Division of Disease Control

*Save These Dates!*

**April 27 & 28, 2012**

**Riverside Hotel**  
620 E. Las Olas Boulevard  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

**Broward County Health Department presents**  
*A Florida Public Health Association Regional Conference*



***“Enhancing Childhood Immunization Strategies and Viral Hepatitis Prevention:  
Where Private and Public Health Intersects”***

*Don't miss these exciting topics:*

**Enhancing Childhood Immunization Strategies**

- FLSHOTS Immunization Registry - Future Plans
- Success in billing private insurance companies for timely reimbursement
- Immunization across the lifespan
- Current immunization recommendations and school guidelines
- Best practices in raising immunization levels
- Talking to parents and guardians who reject immunization

**Viral Hepatitis Prevention**

- New recommendations for universal screening for Hepatitis C
- Treatment challenges of HIV/Hepatitis C co-infection
- Universal Hepatitis B vaccination for adult diabetics
- Improving outcomes for patients with HIV and Hepatitis B co-infection
- The A, B, C's of Hepatitis lab interpretation
- Perinatal Hepatitis B: Caring for infants and mothers

In partnership with Broward County Medical Association,  
Florida Public Health Association and Florida Association of Public Health Nurses

*Funding support from the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable*

*Registration includes meals, refreshments and networking opportunities*

**For more information and to register, visit: [www.fpha.org](http://www.fpha.org)**



**Division of Disease Control**

## Hepatitis Bills Introduced into the Florida Legislature

by Phil Reichert

The “Viral Hepatitis Testing Act of 2012” (HB 1271) was introduced into the Florida House of Representatives by Rep. Mack Bernard (D, West Palm Beach) on January 5, 2012. A matching companion bill was introduced into the Senate by Sen. Gwen Margolis (D, Miami) on January 25.

The “Viral Hepatitis Testing Act” closely mirrors the bills introduced into the House and Senate in Congress last November. Both Florida bills require the Department of Health (DOH) to “carry out surveillance, education and testing programs with respect to hepatitis B and hepatitis C virus infections.” The bills also state a goal where, by 2016, 75% of individuals infected with viral hepatitis will know their infection status. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 75% of individuals infected with hepatitis C in the US do not know they are infected. Most people currently infected with hepatitis C, for example, do not know they are infected, because it can take twenty, or more, years before the virus causes noticeable symptoms. And, most became infected due to injection or other drug use or through blood transfusions before donated blood was tested for hepatitis C.

After analyzing the bills and looking at the capacity of DOH to achieve the activities prescribed in the stated language, it was decided there would be a fiscal impact for DOH to provide significantly more tests to individuals at risk of viral hepatitis. The legislative session ended on March 9th, and the hepatitis bill did not pass.

## And, In Other News...

By Phil Reichert

The Hepatitis Prevention Program has received several inquiries in recent weeks about two items in the news. First, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported in February that in 2007, for the first time, hepatitis C caused more deaths in the United States than HIV. Approximately 12,000 people die each year from the effects of HIV infection and related opportunistic diseases. There were around 15,000 deaths that year due to hepatitis C. Additionally, hepatitis C is a significant co-infection problem in people infected with HIV.

The second issue for which we have received significant questions revolves around some recent research published on who in the US is infected with hepatitis C. According to CDC, about 75% of the people who are infected were born between 1945 and 1965, commonly referred to as baby boomers. Because of this, the CDC Division of Viral Hepatitis will devote an upcoming supplemental MMWR of recommendations regarding this topic. The MMWR will provide recommendations to risk-assess and offer hepatitis C testing to all Americans born between those years, inclusive. Part of the reasoning is that many health care workers, especially those outside the public health sector, have trouble asking their patients tough questions, such as:

- When was the last time you shot up drugs and shared needles?
- How often do you use drugs?
- What type of drugs do you use?
- How many sex partners have you had in the past year?

With the upcoming recommendations from CDC, a health care worker needs only to look at the patient's date-of-birth. If they were born from 1945-1965, hepatitis C testing should be offered.

Around two-thirds to three-fourths of the people infected with hepatitis C in the US do not know their status. After all, hepatitis C does not usually cause noticeable problems for ten, twenty or even thirty years after becoming infected. One of the goals of the US Health and Human Services hepatitis action plan that was released in 2011 is to raise awareness of hepatitis C in those Americans who might be infected and not know it.



## Top 12 Tips for Proper Vaccine Storage and Handling



### Use these tips to improve vaccine storage and handling.

**TIP 1:** Have more than one person responsible for storage and handling of vaccines.

**TIP 2:** Have certified, calibrated thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer compartments.

**TIP 3:** Record temperatures twice per day.

**TIP 4:** Record temperatures for both the refrigerator and freezer.

**TIP 5:** Document out-of-range temperatures on vaccine temperature logs and take action right away.

**TIP 6:** Keep a historical file of monthly temperature logs.

**TIP 7:** Refrigerate vaccine in a manner that does not jeopardize its quality.

**TIP 8:** Use a VFC Program approved storage unit for frozen vaccines.

**TIP 9:** Make sure refrigerator or freezer door is closed properly and has adequate seals.

**TIP 10:** Keep multi-dose vials until expiration date, even after they are opened.

**TIP 11:** Have emergency plans for a power outage or natural disaster.

**TIP 12:** Have a separate unit to store food and drinks rather than in the vaccine refrigerator.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE FLORIDA VACCINES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM AT (800) 483-2543 OR VISIT [WWW.IMMUNIZEFLORIDA.ORG/VFC](http://WWW.IMMUNIZEFLORIDA.ORG/VFC)



Vaccines for Children  
Protecting All of Florida's Children.



Bureau of  
Immunization

# Division of Disease Control