



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HFA Observes National Hepatitis Awareness Month ***May is Designated to Create Public Awareness about Viral Hepatitis***

Washington, D.C. – In 2001, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention designated the month of May as Hepatitis Awareness Month to bring awareness and attention to those living with viral hepatitis.

In the 1980s and 1990s thousands of people with hemophilia contracted HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) from the contaminated blood supply transmitted by clotting factor products. According to CDC Universal Data Collection (UDC), of the 18,300 patients with bleeding disorders (hemophilia and von Willebrand) currently receiving care at specialized comprehensive care Hemophilia Treatment Centers (HTC's), approximately 6,950 have tested positive for Hepatitis C. This chronic condition causes liver damage, liver failure, and has become the leading cause of death among adults with hemophilia.

“National Hepatitis Awareness Month helps to bring public awareness about viral hepatitis and encourage the development of improved prevention, education, and treatment,” said Kimberly Haugstad, Executive Director of HFA. “We are committed to addressing the evolving needs of the bleeding disorders community to create a better quality of life for all persons with bleeding disorders.”

“The current Hepatitis C treatments are difficult and often times ineffective,” said Chad Blair, a young man with hemophilia and Hepatitis C. “We need to put pressure on our legislators to allow the development of new treatments.”

HFA encourages member organizations and patients affected by a bleeding disorders to spread the word about Hepatitis Awareness Month by posting messages on Facebook, Twitter, giving presentations in schools, and sharing information with their family and friends.

About Viral Hepatitis*

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is an acute liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV), lasting from a few weeks to several months. It does not lead to chronic infection.

Transmission: Ingestion of fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts, from close person-to-person contact or ingestion of contaminated food or drinks.

Vaccination: Hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for all children starting at age 1 year, travelers to certain countries, and others at risk.

Hepatitis B

NEWS FROM HEMOPHILIA FEDERATION OF AMERICA



Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). It ranges in severity from a mild illness, lasting a few weeks (acute), to a serious long-term (chronic) illness that can lead to liver disease or liver cancer.

Transmission: Contact with infectious blood, semen, and other body fluids from having sex with an infected person, sharing contaminated needles to inject drugs, or from an infected mother to her newborn.

Vaccination: Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all infants, older children and adolescents who were not vaccinated previously, and adults at risk for HBV infection.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV infection sometimes results in an acute illness, but most often becomes a chronic condition that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

Transmission: Contact with the blood of an infected person, primarily through sharing contaminated needles to inject drugs.

Vaccination: There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C.

Information source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information please visit www.cdc.gov.

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The Hemophilia Federation of America is a national 501(c) (3) organization consisting of more than 30 member organizations and numerous individual members who offer assistance and grassroots advocacy on behalf of the bleeding disorders community. Incorporated in 1994, the HFA provides programs and services to improve the quality of life for persons with hemophilia, von Willebrand disease (VWD) and other rare bleeding disorders.

For more information, visit our website at www.hemophiliafed.org or call 1-800-230-9797.