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NVHR Applauds Hep Free Hawai`i for Landmark Hepatitis Elimination Strategy

Hep Free Hawai`i released the first-of-its-kind, comprehensive strategy to eliminate all forms of viral hepatitis by 2030.

Washington, D.C. (July 29, 2020) – The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a national coalition working to eliminate viral hepatitis, today applauded Hep Free Hawai`i (HFH) for launching the first-of-its-kind, [hepatitis A, B, and C elimination plan](#) to eliminate viral hepatitis in the state by 2030. Viral hepatitis impacts approximately 63,000 people in Hawai`i, which has among the highest rates of liver cancer in the country.

“The comprehensive elimination strategy launched in Hawai`i can serve as a blueprint for the 36 other states in the U.S. that have not yet implemented hepatitis elimination strategies and reaffirms the priority to eliminate hepatitis in the U.S. by 2030,” said Michael Ninburg, Executive Director of the Hepatitis Education Project (HEP). “We are one step closer to eliminating these harmful diseases that impact almost 5 million Americans. It’s inspiring to see Hawai`i prioritizing public health resources to fight health and social inequalities and the stigma that many hepatitis patients face.”

Hawai`i is the 14th state in the country to implement a hepatitis elimination strategy, which is an important step towards eliminating hepatitis in the U.S. In 2016, the U.S. and 193 other countries pledged to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030, which impacts more than 325 million people globally. Through vaccines and curative treatments, viral hepatitis can be eliminated and has been declared a “winnable battle” by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The HFH strategic plan identifies five priorities to eliminate hepatitis in Hawai`i: awareness and education, access to services, advocacy at all levels; equity in everything; and data for decision making. It also articulates four core values: harm reduction, social justice, intersectionality, and aloha.

“Our goal is to create a Hawai`i free of hepatitis and liver disease by launching this strategic elimination strategy that continues the collaboration and discussion between medical professionals, public health professionals, and community advocates. We seek to raise awareness and increase access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of liver disease and to erase stigma, social inequity, and health disparity surrounding communities affected by liver disease,” added HFH Co-Director Heather Lusk.

For more information about HFH’s Hep Free 2030, please visit www.hepfreehawaii.org.

About the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, a program of [HEP](#), is a national coalition working together to eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States. NVHR’s vision is a healthier world without viral hepatitis. NVHR’s work is guided and informed by our beliefs and commitment to: Participation, Inclusiveness, Intersectionality, Health Equity, and Stigma Elimination. For more information, visit www.nvhr.org

About Hep Free Hawai`i (HFH)

Hep Free Hawai`i (HFH) is a coalition of local, national, and global partners dedicated to increasing awareness of and access to viral hepatitis and harm reduction services throughout the state of Hawai`i. Born out of a partnership between the Hawai`i Department of Health, the CHOW Project (now the Hawai`i Health & Harm Reduction Center), and other community agencies, Hep Free Hawai`i has been successful by connecting with communities across the islands to make Hawai`i truly “Hep Free.”

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