



Fighting HBV with a Community-Based Multiprong Approach

SF Hep B Free- Bay Area (San Francisco Bay Area)

Background

While much progress has been made in the prevention of hepatitis B transmission to infants at birth in the United States, chronic hepatitis B infection and the liver cancer it causes in immigrant adults remains stubbornly high in many communities. A 2018 study by Stanford University estimated approximately 100,000 Bay Area residents are infected with chronic hepatitis B. (Toy, M., Wei, B., Virdi, T.S. et al. Racial/ethnic- and county-specific prevalence of chronic hepatitis B and its burden in California. Hepatology Medicine Policy 3, 6 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41124-018-0034-7>)

The San Francisco Bay Area has some of the highest liver cancer rates in the country, likely due to the large Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant population and the high rate of hepatitis B.



Despite having an effective vaccine and effective treatments when the hepatitis B virus is caught early, lack of awareness, knowledge and screening prevent detection. As many as two thirds of those infected do not know it and one in four will develop deadly liver disease or cancer.

In order to truly make a difference in the morbidity and mortality of hepatitis B caused disease, we must involve the communities at risk and increase resources towards hepatitis B awareness, screening, surveillance. We must strive towards a systemic change in standards of care that screen at-risk patients for hepatitis B.

Purpose

- To make a real impact on hepatitis B awareness, screening, and vaccination in the community
- To leverage existing community resources (advocacy, health care system, businesses, elected officials, ethnic media) to build a sustainable campaign without significant outside funding
- To build a grass-roots model for better hepatitis B awareness and preventative care in the community.



Methodology

1. Gather a wide variety of stakeholders

- Local advocates
- local health system
- local business
- local elected officials
- local ethnic media



1. Assess need

- Consult community members, health systems etc.

1. Assess various strategies to achieve goal

- Public awareness
- Physicians
- Vaccination
- Creating a data baseline



1. Develop goals

- Create a threshold of awareness about hepatitis B and the liver cancer it causes
- Give the community (the public and business community) the tools to be educated, tested and vaccinated with ease
- Targeting a large high-risk group - small business owners and employees (newer immigrants, language barriers, fewer resources)
- Remind physicians to educate, test and vaccinate their patients
- Create a foundation of data to track education, testing and vaccination

1. Develop the solution

- Public Awareness Campaign (2-month blitz)
 - SamTrans (Northern San Mateo County Route)
- Ethnic Media
 - Chinese, Filipino
- Community Survey, Education and Screening
 - North County Business Initiative - Asian-centric businesses in Northern San Mateo County
- Vaccine Program
 - Partnership with pharma and retail outlets
- Physician Education
 - Working with medical/physician groups
- Data Baseline Creation
 - Track # of screenings and vaccination at onset and completion of intervention



Results

- Surveyed and gathered met local stakeholders from all the groups listed
- Assessed need, gathered buy-in
- Confirmed support of local elected officials, health systems, advocates, businesses and ethnic media
- Built education, screening and vaccination plan around local Asian centric businesses
- Met with restaurant managers and owners
- Set up partnership with local pharmaceutical company to provide vaccination in retail locations
- Setup virtual physician education program around hepatitis B
- Performed 1 large chinese restaurant education and knowledge survey
- Unable to continue due to outbreak of the COVID pandemic



Conclusions

- Community-based approaches leverage existing resources and connections to help projects succeed
- Including and harnessing input from all relevant stakeholders is critical
 - Local stakeholders know best and lead to the most effective and efficient strategies
 - Understanding and including your target audience and how to create lasting change is important
 - You must understand who your community listens to and how?
- Using multi pronged strategies to hit the public health issue from differing angles is important to make a sustainable difference and improve the chances of reaching a threshold of real change
- Creating a baseline of data for your issue is important to track progress and understand the need
- Sustainability and Expansion
 - The project is requesting \$150,000/year for 3 years to truly create sustained change in hepatitis B knowledge, testing and vaccination.
 - Consecutive years will focus on expanding the business initiative to other heavily Asian cities in the area and strengthening data collection.

Implications

- This model can be used across many public health issues especially those being undertaken with lower funding sources.



For any questions or comments please contact Executive Director Richard So at richard.so@sfehpbfree-bayarea.org