



May 19, 2012

Honorable William Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Mike Honda
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Charles Dent
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Hank Johnson, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Cassidy, Honda, Dent and Johnson:

On the occasion of the first ever Viral Hepatitis Testing Day, the undersigned organizations write to thank you for your strong leadership in this area, evidenced by the introduction of H.R. 3381, the **"Viral Hepatitis Testing Act."** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as many as 75 percent of people with chronic viral hepatitis do not know that they are infected. Your legislation is necessary to ensure that viral hepatitis testing is available and that the public and health professionals are educated about viral hepatitis.

As you know, early diagnosis of hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) can reduce the risk of transmission and disease progression through education and care. The Institute of Medicine, in a 2010 report, made clear that HBV and HCV cause substantial morbidity and mortality despite being preventable and treatable. Treatment for HCV is curative and can eradicate the disease in approximately 75% of those treated. Treatment for HBV is not curative, but can reduce the level of the virus in over 80% of those treated.

To combat the viral hepatitis epidemic, HHS released an Action Plan one year ago this month titled, ***"Combating the Silent Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis: Action Plan for the Prevention, Care & Treatment of Viral Hepatitis."***

It is critically important to identify and eliminate barriers to the implementation of viral hepatitis testing and improve the linkage of infected patients to care and treatment. Our groups are committed to addressing viral hepatitis, known as the "silent epidemic." Through your support and enactment of this legislation, we can achieve the shared goals of increasing the number of individuals who are aware of their infection, improving public education and updating health professional training. We are ready to work with you to ensure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,