

# HEPATITIS ALERT

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Virginia Health Educators learning about the important functions of the liver.

## *...a reminder for National Hepatitis Screening Day*

WTVR CBS TV program, *Virginia This Morning in Richmond* has invited Thelma King Thiel back on May 18 for another interview the day before National Hepatitis Screening Day, May 19, 2012. Her focus will be on motivating Baby Boomers to ask their healthcare provider to test them for hepatitis C. This group of individuals is at high risk of being infected even though they may have no signs or symptoms of infection. New treatments now available have greatly improved success rates and even cures. To identify locations for screenings go to <http://www.cdcnpin.org/HTD/HTD/asp>.

## **LIVER WELLNESS MESSAGES HIT THE MARK WITH HEALTH EDUCATORS**

Forty health education curriculum supervisors for Virginia's public school divisions attended a Foundation for Decision Making (FDM) session on Liver Health and Wellness in Charlottesville, VA last week. All who attended reported a greater understanding of the function and importance of the liver and how it affects their health. The feedback provided in the FDM session evaluation also indicated that they were alerted to the need to modify several of their personal behaviors that have the potential to cause liver damage.

The goal of the FDM program, conducted by Thelma King Thiel, Chair of the Hepatitis Foundation International, is to fill the gap in knowledge about the important role the body's internal chemical power plant, the liver, plays in maintaining hundreds of body functions. Quick, easy and memorable communication techniques were shared to enhance the teachers' efforts to motivate students to avoid liver damaging behaviors. Knowledge is the key to promoting prevention of liver related diseases including fatty liver, obesity, hepatitis, diabetes, high cholesterol, and even heart attacks. Liver health and wellness education can save lives as well as healthcare dollars.

"We learned a lot of new information and are excited about having excellent teaching tools, DVDs, and other resources to add to our curricula," said Vanessa Wigand, Principal Specialist for Health Education, Physical Education, Driver Education and Athletics, Virginia Department of Education. The Health and Family Life Program Coordinators who attended the FDM training session represent large school divisions in Virginia and serve 1.25 million students in the Commonwealth.

## SHOW STOPPERS AT EUROPEAN LIVER MEETINGS

The startling success rate in Phase 2 studies in a joint venture of Gilead's nucleotide inhibitor and Bristol Meyers replication complex inhibitor, daclatasvir, took center stage at the European Liver Meetings in Spain showing sustained viral response measured four weeks after stopping therapy of 100% for genotype 1 patients and 91% for genotypes 2 and 3. Avoiding the need for ribavirin and as an all-oral therapy was encouraging news for patients and their caregivers.

- Vertex released results on a Phase 2 clinical trial of Incivek along with pegylated-interferon and ribavirin showing 100% cure rate in patients treated over a period of 12 weeks. They also have a Phase 2 study on effects of a non-interferon drug treatment for HCV as well as Phase 3 clinical trials to study the effects of Incivek on those with both HIV and HCV.
- Abbott Laboratories reported on its new oral Hepatitis C treatment, a combination of two of its drugs, ABT-072 and ABT-450 showing a 95% cure rate in patients who received treatment for only 12 weeks.
- Johnson & Johnson's drug, TMC435, recently entered Phase 3 clinical trials having revealed that 83% of the participants in the Phase 2 trials showed positive results after 24 weeks.
- GlaxoSmithKline reported that its drug, Promacta (eltrombopag) helped cure those with hepatitis C and thrombocytopenia.

## LIVER ENZYME TELLS BRAIN TO REDUCE FOOD INTAKE

Australian Researchers at the University of Melbourne found that an enzyme in the liver (FBPase) increased when fatty foods were consumed and sent a signal to the brain to reduce appetite-stimulating genes. The overall affect was that after fat was consumed the brain told the body to reduce its food intake, thereby limiting weight gain. Unfortunately, the system only works in response to saturated fat in a normal diet and would not stop obesity in people who ate fat and sugar-laden diets. The mice in the study with more FBPase had half the amount of fatty tissue and ate less food than those mice without the extra enzymes. FBPase's main role is to produce glucose in the liver, but researchers found it is more important in regulating body weight.

## NEW PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES FOR TREATING HCV

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) recently published an updated practice guideline on the treatment of chronic infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotype 1. The guideline, authored by members of the AASLD practice guideline committee, was issued in response to the development of new direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) and the identification of several single nucleotide polymorphisms associated with spontaneous and treatment-induced clearance of HCV infection. Go here to learn more: <http://www.aasld.org/practiceguidelines/Documents/2011UpdateGenotype1HCVbyASLD24641.pdf>

### ***Our Mission...***

To promote liver wellness, healthy lifestyles, and reduce the incidence of preventable diseases that affect the liver's health including obesity, diabetes, fatty liver, hepatitis, HIV, and substance abuse.



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