



Hepatitis B Foundation

3805 Old Easton Road
Doylestown, PA 18902
Phone: (215) 489-4900 Fax: (215) 489-4920
www.hepb.org

Cause for a Cure

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October 14, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

On behalf of the Hepatitis B Foundation, I am writing to urge the inclusion of strong prevention and wellness provisions in the final health care reform bill. We believe that both the House and Senate Committees have done well to address this important issue and urge that these provisions be included in the final bill.

With approximately 2,000,000 people in the United States who have been infected with hepatitis B and nearly one out of ten Asian and Pacific-Islander Americans chronically infected with hepatitis B, the nation is faced with a major public health challenge. The best protection from hepatitis B is better prevention and wellness activities to avoid contracting the infection, but also to slow its progression for those who are infected.

The first and easiest step towards prevention of hepatitis B is urging widespread use of the existing safe and effective vaccine. Prevention activities can also help those already infected with the hepatitis B virus as behavioral changes can slow disease progression if diagnosis is made early. Early diagnosis, which is available through simple blood tests, can reduce the risk of transmission and disease progression through education and vaccination of household members and other people at risk.

It is essential that the United States make a major advance and strong commitment to prevention and wellness programs. Not only will this improve the health of the nation by reducing the incidence of obesity, diabetes and other chronic conditions, but it will substantially contribute to reducing overall health costs. As the House and Senate work towards finalizing health reform, strong support from you and your Administration is important to insure prevention and wellness programs are included in the final legislation.

Thank you for your support for prevention and wellness programs. The Hepatitis B Foundation stands ready to assist you and the Congress in achieving our national health goals.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Block, Ph.D.
President and Co-Founder