

On 28 July 2011, the World Hepatitis Alliance will coordinate the fourth global World Hepatitis Day and the first working in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO). The aim for 2011 is to continue to raise awareness of chronic hepatitis B and C around the globe and to drive policy change for improvements in health outcomes for patients. Together, hepatitis B and C affect one in 12 people worldwide and kill approximately one million people every year¹.

How did World Hepatitis Day start?

World Hepatitis Day was launched by the World Hepatitis Alliance in 2008 in response to the concern that chronic viral hepatitis did not have the level of awareness, nor the political momentum, seen with other communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. This is despite the fact that the number of people chronically infected with, and the number of deaths caused by, hepatitis B and C is on the same scale as these conditions. World Hepatitis Day has generated massive public and media interest, as well as support from governments, high-profile Non-Governmental Organisations and supranational bodies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO). To date, more than 1,000 events have taken place around the world, from rock concerts and press briefings to ministerial meetings and fundraising events. 2011 will be the first year that World Hepatitis Day is recognised as an official world disease awareness day as endorsed by WHO and its 193 member states.

Working with WHO in 2011

In May 2010, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution on viral hepatitis which, together with vital commitments on prevention, treatment and patient care, made World Hepatitis Day an official WHO awareness day. WHO is now working with the Alliance as a collaborating partner on WHD 2011.

In recognition of the birthday of Professor Baruch Blumberg, who won the Nobel Prize for discovering the hepatitis B virus, WHO decided that World Hepatitis Day will take place on 28 July. Sadly Professor Blumberg died in April 2011, and this will add further poignancy to the date this year.



WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, addresses the Sixty-third World Health Assembly. WHO

**This Year's Campaign - *This is hepatitis...*
Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere.**

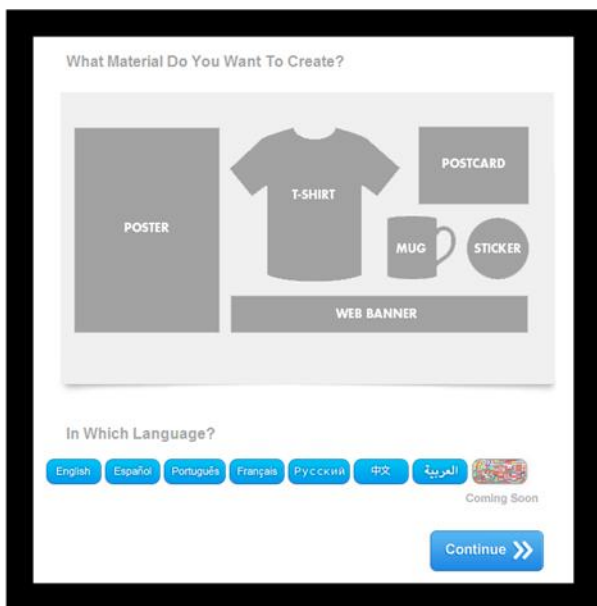
The 2011 theme for World Hepatitis Day is *'This is hepatitis... Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere.'* This theme complements 'Am I Number 12?' which remains the principle awareness-raising campaign of the World Hepatitis Alliance and has been a central component of the World Hepatitis Day movement since its launch. This inclusive theme emphasises the scale of viral hepatitis (1 in 12 of the global population is chronically infected with hepatitis B or C) and helps combat the stigma often associated with hepatitis B and C by conveying the fact that these viruses do not discriminate.



'This is hepatitis... Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere' tells the global human story of viral hepatitis, focusing on the real life impact of these diseases in order to generate increased understanding among the general public. The theme aims to communicate the following messages:

- **Encouraging patients to speak out** about their own experiences and to play a role in educating and supporting others (*'This is hepatitis...'*)
- **Challenging individuals to become better aware** and involved in tackling hepatitis (*'Know it. Confront it'*)
- **Reinforcing the prevalence and global impact of hepatitis** and reducing the stigma associated with these diseases (*'Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere'*).

The World Hepatitis Alliance has developed several campaign materials to support local organisations in their communications around the 2011 theme. These materials (posters, postcards and web banners) can be found on the Alliance website. Also new for 2011 on the website is an online **material creation tool**, which enables patient groups to customise their own posters, mugs, postcards and other materials. This is a truly innovative step and one that the Alliance is proud to be able to host and make available to hepatitis patient group communities worldwide.



Beyond raising awareness: the '12 Asks'

Although raising awareness is vitally important, the scope of World Hepatitis Day goes even further. The World Hepatitis Alliance has developed a wide-ranging integrated campaign, including initiatives focused on driving policy change both at an international and national level. The '12 Asks' to governments are a central element of the campaign and set out key elements that should be incorporated into national strategies to ensure improvements in health outcomes for patients. All governments are being asked to sign up to the '12 Asks'.

Will one day change the world?

The World Hepatitis Alliance recognises that one day will not change the world. World Hepatitis Day is a stepping stone that focuses first on raising global awareness and then on securing international and national support for improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support for people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C.

What is the World Hepatitis Alliance?

The World Hepatitis Alliance is a Non-Governmental Organisation established in 2007, working with over 280 chronic hepatitis B and C patient groups around the world. As a coalition of advocacy groups, the World Hepatitis Alliance is a global voice for the 500 million people worldwide living with chronic hepatitis B or C. The aim of the World Hepatitis Alliance is to provide global leadership and support action that will halt the death toll and improve the lives of people living with chronic hepatitis B and C. The World Hepatitis Alliance works with governments to increase awareness and access to treatment as well as to improve prevention, care and support, with the ultimate goal of eradicating these diseases from the planet. The World Hepatitis Alliance is governed by a board consisting entirely of hepatitis B or C patients and elected by patient groups from the six WHO world regions: Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa, the Americas, South-East Asia and Western Pacific.

World Hepatitis Alliance – seeking a world without viral hepatitis B and C.

Where does World Hepatitis Day take place?

World Hepatitis Day is a global initiative and should take place in every country. All 193 countries that are Member States of WHO committed themselves to marking World Hepatitis Day when they adopted World Health Assembly 63 Resolution 18 and the resolution calls on WHO to provide support for the Day for those countries needing it. WHO has also sent out suggestions for marking the day through its Regional and Country offices.

For more information

For more information on the theme for the 2011 campaign please take a look at our website - www.worldhepatitisalliance.org

If you have any questions please email the World Hepatitis Alliance at contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org

Reference

¹ World Health Organization. Viral hepatitis: Report by the Secretariat. http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB126/B126_15-en.pdf