



World Hepatitis  
Alliance

## Toolkit: How to Generate Policy Change in Your Country

This is hepatitis...

World Hepatitis Day: July 28 2012  
[www.worldhepatitisday.info](http://www.worldhepatitisday.info)



WORLD HEPATITIS DAY World Hepatitis  
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# How to Generate Policy Change in Your Country

## Introduction

The adoption of a resolution on viral hepatitis in May 2010 illustrates that, in principle, all of the World Health Organization (WHO) member states are committed to taking action to tackle hepatitis B and C.

The Resolution (WHA63.18) mandated WHO to develop a [global strategy for the prevention and control of viral hepatitis](#). The framework of the strategy composed of four axes and 20 elements is available in [appendix 7](#) for your reference. The World Hepatitis Alliance ('the Alliance') strongly believes that every country where there is significant prevalence of hepatitis B and/or C should aim to translate this global strategy into a comprehensive national strategy of its own to tackle these diseases.

The Alliance has also produced *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy*, a WHO-commissioned report on existing policy in various countries and the areas in which they want assistance, as well as a set of '12 Asks' with suggestions for what any national strategy should contain. All of these can be used in the process of government engagement.

Generating policy change can be challenging. This toolkit is designed to help you work with your government to develop a national strategy that can be implemented in your country.

This toolkit includes the following:

1. Preparing your campaign
2. Discussions with your government
3. Activity on World Hepatitis Day
4. Engaging with WHO
5. Using the media to create understanding

Further details on the WHO Resolution, *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report, the '12 Asks' and template letters for engaging government on different issues are available in the Appendices and are available as downloads on the Alliance site.

### 1. Preparing your campaign

#### Clear Objectives

**Objective:** encourage the government to recognise the importance of the WHO resolution and to turn this into action.

**Outcome:** a clear national hepatitis strategy. If one does not already exist in your country, you can focus on putting one in place. If there is an existing national strategy, you can seek better implementation.

Your objectives will need to highlight particular issues, depending on the circumstances and priority areas in your country. For example, improving injection safety to prevent new infections may be a higher priority for you than improving access to treatment or vice versa. The WHO resolution and *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report will provide a basis for engagement with government.

#### Assessing the Environment

Hepatitis B and C are global diseases recognised by the WHO resolution, but every country has varying public health priorities and different approaches to healthcare. National, regional and local

organisations are best placed to understand the policy environment in each country and use this to inform the content of the national strategy.

To help assess your environment, consider the following:

- What is the nature of your current relationship with government?
- Does the WHO resolution or other material provide an opportunity to develop a closer relationship with government?
- Will your government respond to a positive or a negative approach?
- Will this approach achieve your policy objectives in your country?

### Identifying the Key Players

Getting your messages heard by the right people is essential to successfully influence policy. These people might include:

- Key Health Ministers
- Opposition spokespeople
- Government officials
- Journalists
- Campaign groups
- Academics

### How to reach them

- Online research
- Refer to *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy*, which includes whether there is a dedicated person to lead the development and implementation of viral hepatitis policy in each country
- [Contact the Alliance](#) as we may be able to share key contact details with you

## 2. Discussions with Your Government

### Setting up a meeting

It is important to set up a meeting with a member of your local government to ensure your voice is heard. To help you, draft letters are available in the Appendices for you to adapt and use.

### Preparing for the meeting

- Know your specific objective or outcome
- Research the necessary information
- Plan or script out the meeting
- Take the relevant materials with you
- Rehearse or walk-through what you are going to say before you go

### Suggested meeting content

- Consider using the '12 Asks' programme to help form your discussion. Following the passing of the WHO resolution in May 2010, the 'Asks' were revised to take account of the specific actions set out in the resolution. Further information on the '12 Asks' is available in [appendix 3](#)
- Refer to the materials included in the [Policy section](#) of the Alliance website which you may find helpful as the basis for your discussions
- You may also be able to work proactively with your government to identify areas where you can help them by giving advice and expertise based on your experience. *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* identified where countries felt that they required extra support from WHO – do you have knowledge in these areas which can benefit the government?

REMEMBER, without proactive action from governments, the WHO resolution will have very little effect.

### 3. Activity on World Hepatitis Day

The WHO resolution commits all member countries to supporting World Hepatitis Day (WHD) activities and makes WHD an internationally recognised day like World AIDS Day and World Health Day.

Your government may be concerned about the cost of organising WHD events so share with them global materials provided by the Alliance. These are developed to support each country's WHD activities and to help deliver a cost-effective, successful campaign. Your government should also be aware that WHO is committed to supporting resource-poor member states in their implementation of the resolution.

You could assist your government with:

- Carrying out a needs assessment
- Partnering to deliver an awareness/prevention message on World Hepatitis Day
- Arranging a national viral hepatitis roundtable event with key local groups to establish consensus for coordinated action to tackle viral hepatitis

### Collaboration

Partnering with another organisation also focused on viral hepatitis or with knowledge of the health sector can:

- Maximise the impact of your campaign. For example, you can combine contacts and share costs and knowledge
- Support you with the distribution of press releases or the writing of blog posts
- Present a stronger case to the government. For example, policymakers are more likely to be receptive to a request for a meeting if the letter comes from a coalition of groups with a united voice rather than a single organisation

### 4. Engaging with WHO

WHO support for WHD will be organised through Regional and Country Offices. Because WHO Country Offices have close working relations with Ministries of Health, it is worth building a relationship with your WHO Country Office or relevant WHO Regional Office. The first step is to find the name of the relevant WHO official and contact them to set up a meeting.

[http://www.who.int/countryfocus/country\\_offices/en/](http://www.who.int/countryfocus/country_offices/en/)

### An International Perspective

The Alliance works with over 280 patient groups globally, and your organisation is part of a worldwide movement working to raise awareness and advocating for policy change and better outcomes for patients. This can be used to your advantage by:

- Stressing the global nature of the campaign to your government and highlight that your patient group is not an isolated organisation that can be easily ignored
- Using the *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report to highlight differences between hepatitis policy in your country and neighbouring nations or at a regional level

### 5. Using the Media to create understanding

Capitalising on media influence can be an important part of any advocacy campaign. In assessing the policy environment of your country and holding initial discussions with your government, you will be able to identify an appropriate stance with which to approach the media:

- **If your government is committed to supporting the WHO resolution** and open to your involvement with their initiatives, make use of the media to celebrate this relationship, to reinforce joint goals and shared initiatives as well as generate awareness among the general public
- **If, however, your government is more resistant to translating the WHO resolution** into proactive initiatives, work with the media to raise public awareness of the situation and the need for government action with a public-led call for change

In engaging with the media you could:

- **Issue a press release** to national media, including press and broadcast, commenting on the content of the Alliance's *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report by comparing and contrasting your country's policies with those of neighbouring countries or those in your region
- **Link specific objectives with government priorities** and topical issues already considered newsworthy. For example, you may have statistics that demonstrate the long-term cost of viral hepatitis to the national economy and the impact that delayed diagnosis and treatment can have on the government's national budget
- **Announce collaborations with other organisations** and launch joint media campaigns to highlight them
- **Organise an educational event or public meeting** with government representatives, key medical experts and patients, and invite media to cover the event
- **Issue a joint press release with your government or with the WHO Country Office** to celebrate national action, for example WHD
- **Approach a politician with an interest in the issue to write an article** on hepatitis. Then approach a policy, health, news focused publication or even political blog to gauge interest to commission the article. The politician is likely to need your assistance on drafting the content which they can approve
- **Approach a politician to approve a quote or record a podcast** for use with the media and wider campaign. In 2011, the UK Prime Minister and US President provided quotes.

Use **social media** to achieve your policy objectives. Encourage your followers to address their local politician through platforms such as Twitter by using the following tweets:

- Will you promote our activities in parliament ahead of World Hepatitis Day? <insert shortened URL to campaign page> #closerthanyouthink
- As my MP, help us tell our government why tackling viral hepatitis is a priority for <insert country> #closerthanyouthink

The example below shows how patient groups and stakeholders have used the media effectively in their advocacy campaigns –

## Algeria 2011:

The national association SOS Hépatites Algérie (ANHC) led a week-long media campaign leading up to World Hepatitis Day in their efforts to raise awareness of the disease in the country where as Abdelhamid Bouallag, president of the association, declared: "1.5 million people are infected". The campaign included awareness raising TV and radio ads. Various articles were also published calling for the government to urgently put in place the hepatitis national plan developed back in 2005 and announcing the intention of the ANHC to organise a sit-in demonstration at the Ministry of Health in September if no serious actions to tackle these diseases were taken. On 28<sup>th</sup> July, the day was opened by a round table debate attended by MPs, journalists and Ministry of Health representatives.

If you would like the Alliance to support your national activities or if you would like advice on your media campaign please email [contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org](mailto:contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org)

More ideas for events, guidance on online activities and tips on how to work with the media can be found in the [Awareness-raising Toolkit area on the Alliance website](#) ([www.worldhepatitisalliance.org](http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org)), which is regularly updated.

### Appendix 1: What is the WHO Resolution?

In May 2010, WHO member states agreed a [resolution](#) on viral hepatitis at the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly. This means that governments from all 193 WHO member states made an international commitment to tackle viral hepatitis and clearly stated the need for coordinated global action, backed by dedicated resources.

The resolution means that all countries have 'resolved' to mark World Hepatitis Day on July 28 every year and have been urged to -

- Improve [surveillance](#)
- [Integrate](#) viral hepatitis into other government health programmes
- Involve [NGOs/civil society](#)
- Improve [prevention/health promotion](#)
- Improve [diagnosis](#)
- Improve [access to treatment](#)
- Improve safety/quality of [blood products](#)
- Reach out to [migrant & vulnerable populations](#)
- Improve [injection safety](#)
- Improve [protection of healthcare workers](#)

The resolution also encourages WHO to coordinate the activity and to -

- [Develop a global strategy](#) including time-bound goals and guidelines/protocols
- Provide [guidance](#) on what works
- [Assess the global burden](#) of viral hepatitis
- Help [resource-constrained countries](#) with World Hepatitis Day
- Increase [international investment](#) in viral hepatitis
- [Strengthen the Safe Injection Global Network](#)
- Work with stakeholders to [improve access to drugs](#)
- Monitor [implementation](#) of the resolution

## Appendix 2: What is the *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report?

The Alliance was commissioned by the WHO to produce the *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* report. This detailed report presents the findings from a survey of Ministries of Health across the world. It provides an overview and breakdown of countries' policies and programmes to prevent and control viral hepatitis. The survey responses were used to form three core sections of the report –

- 1) Country Data – each country which responded has its own page
- 2) Regional Analysis – based on the official WHO regions
- 3) Global Analysis – an overview of the findings highlighting areas of unmet global need

This report tells us what governments say is happening in various countries. However, the Alliance has not been able to verify this information, and, crucially, the report does not assess how these policies are being implemented. Because you may have viral hepatitis policy and patient environment experience in your country, you can fully assess this information and hold your government accountable.

### *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy* - Topics to discuss with your Government:

- Did your country respond to the Policy Report? If not, why not?
- If it did respond, where does the government feel that it is performing well?
- Does your organisation recognise these initiatives - are they having the intended effect?
- In what areas does your government identify a need for WHO support?
- Could you or a coalition of patient organisations provide help in these areas?
- How does your country compare to other countries?

You can find the full report (in English) and Executive Summary (in Arabic, English, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish) on the [Alliance website](#).

An example of a country page, with highlighted sections, is below for reference.

**Country Name:** each country which responded has its own page in the report. If your country is not listed, it did not respond.

**Assistance from the WHO:** this tells you specific areas where your government reports that it wants help from the WHO.

**Public Awareness & Education:** has the government carried out any public awareness-raising?

**Testing:** this lists your government's testing policies including access, cost, and whether testing is compulsory for any groups.

**Treatment and Care:** this lists if your government reports having patient pathways in place and if it provides funding for care.

**Surveillance:** this notes if your government reports that it has surveillance systems in place for hepatitis B/C, and if so, the features of the system.

**Working with Civil Society:** if your government reports that it works with patient groups, healthcare professional groups or other NGOs, then this will be listed here.

**Government Policy Outline:** this lists your government's policies including if there is a national strategy in place.

### Appendix 3: What are the '12 Asks'?

The '12 Asks' are a series of requests for governments to help ensure that hepatitis B and C is being tackled in their country. It is also a useful, structured lobbying tool for patient groups.

The '12 Asks' are available below and can be used as the basis for discussions with your government about what should be contained in a national strategy.

#### The '12 Asks' are:

1. Promotion of World Hepatitis Day as the focus for ongoing campaigns which are committed to increasing disease awareness, reducing stigma and promoting prevention
2. Appointment of an individual to lead government strategy nationally
3. Development of an integrated approach for screening, diagnosis, referral and treatment, using the policies, strategies and tools recommended by the World Health Organization
4. Commitment to increase the number of persons diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B and C infections
5. Commitment to reduce hepatitis-related mortality, incorporating time-bound goals
6. Commitment to increase surveillance and publish national statistics
7. Commitment to work with patient groups in policy design and implementation
8. Commitment to examine cases of best practice internationally in designing and implementing programmes
9. Provision of affordable and confidential testing
10. Inclusion of hepatitis B vaccine in national immunization programme, including birth dose provision
11. Commitment to safe healthcare, including the promotion and enabling of safe injection practices and the strengthening of the safety of blood and blood products
12. Strengthening of efforts to protect, diagnose and treat migrant and vulnerable populations

#### Appendix 4: Template Letter offering co-operation around WHD activities (for local adaptation)

(Insert your local patient group(s) logo(s))

Name of Minister – (ensure correct title)

Department/Ministry of Health (Whichever appropriate in your Country)

Address

Address

Address

Date: XXXXXX

Dear XXX (To be written by hand)

As you will be aware, the World Health Organization (WHO) resolution WHA63.18 establishes World Hepatitis Day as an official global disease awareness day. At the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly all WHO member states agreed to mark World Hepatitis Day as the focus of disease awareness activities.

I am writing to you to request a meeting to discuss how [insert name of your group] can support the government in meeting this commitment. We already have plans to mark this occasion and are keen to coordinate this activity with the Ministry and the relevant WHO office.

The World Hepatitis Alliance (the Alliance) is a non-governmental organisation working in partnership with WHO to coordinate World Hepatitis Day on 28 July. The Alliance is an international NGO, which brings together over 280 viral hepatitis patient groups in more than 60 countries globally. As one of these patient groups, [insert name of your group] is able to access tailored Alliance resources, including WHO-approved materials, and the knowledge and experience acquired from organising World Hepatitis Day activities during the last [insert number of years] years.

I enclose some information regarding previous World Hepatitis Day activities with which we have been involved [add materials to your letter wherever possible] and which I hope you will find interesting.

I very much hope you will be able to meet with me regarding coordination of this important awareness day. If you are agreeable to a meeting, I would be glad to speak with your office to find a time that suits you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
[Sign by hand]

## Appendix 5: Template Letter asking for a meeting to discuss the resolution and how your group can support the government (for local adaptation)

(Insert your local patient group(s) logo(s))

Name of Minister – (ensure correct title)

Department/Ministry of Health (Whichever appropriate in your Country)

Address

Address

Address

Date: XXXXXX

Dear XXX (To be written by hand)

As you will be aware, the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly agreed the first ever World Health Organization (WHO) resolution on viral hepatitis. This international commitment to tackle viral hepatitis clearly states the need for coordinated global action, backed by dedicated resources. As a patient group representing those people affected by viral hepatitis, I would like to thank the government for its support for this important resolution.

I am also writing to you to request a meeting to discuss how [insert name of your group] can support the government in building on this opportunity and meeting its commitment. The resolution urges member states to develop an integrated and cost-effective approach to the prevention, control and management of viral hepatitis and to involve civil society organisations in this activity.

The WHO-commissioned report, *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy*, outlines areas in which the Government says that it would benefit from support from the WHO. These include [insert information from Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy]. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can provide support in the areas identified by the Ministry.

The World Hepatitis Alliance (the Alliance) is a non-governmental organisation working in partnership with WHO to coordinate World Hepatitis Day on 28 July, as established by the resolution. The Alliance is an international NGO, which brings together over 280 viral hepatitis patient groups in more than 60 countries globally. As one of these patient groups, [insert name of your group] is able to draw on the collective knowledge and experience acquired from efforts to prevent and control viral hepatitis by governments and civil society around the world. We also have a detailed knowledge of patients' needs in this country and extensive experience in communications and service delivery [to be adapted based on your specific experience].

I very much hope you will meet with me to discuss how we might support the government's response to this public health priority.

If you are agreeable to a meeting, I would be glad to speak with your office to find a time that suits you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
[Sign by hand]

## Appendix 6: Template Letter highlighting Government policies where more work is required (for local adaptation)

(Insert your local patient group(s) logo(s))  
Name of Minister – (ensure correct title)  
Department/Ministry of Health (Whichever appropriate in your Country)  
Address  
Address  
Address  
Date: XXXXXX

Dear XXX (To be written by hand)

As you will be aware, the 63<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly agreed the first ever World Health Organization (WHO) resolution on viral hepatitis. This international commitment to tackle viral hepatitis clearly states the need for coordinated global action, backed by dedicated resources. As a patient group representing those people affected by viral hepatitis, I would like to thank the government for its support for this important resolution. We recognise that the Government has already taken initial steps to prevent and control viral hepatitis, for example through [insert examples of existing programmes]. However, much more needs to be done to stop the death toll in this country. As outlined in the resolution, all countries should develop an integrated strategic approach to the prevention, control and management of viral hepatitis. The WHO-commissioned report, *Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy*, demonstrates several gaps in policy on viral hepatitis in this country which will need to be addressed as part of a coordinated approach. Areas in which action is urgently required include [insert priority areas as appropriate].

I am writing to you to request a meeting to discuss how [insert name of your group] can support the government in taking forward this action. WHO also urges member states to involve civil society organisations in activity to prevent and control hepatitis and we would be pleased to support your efforts in this important area.

The World Hepatitis Alliance (the Alliance) is a non-governmental organisation working in partnership with WHO to coordinate World Hepatitis Day on 28, as established by the resolution. The Alliance brings together over 280 viral hepatitis patient groups in more than 60 countries globally. As one of these patient groups, [insert name of your group] is able to draw on the collective knowledge and experience acquired from efforts to prevent and control viral hepatitis by governments and civil society around the world. We also have a detailed knowledge of patients' needs in this country and extensive experience in communications and service delivery [to be adapted based on your specific experience].

I very much hope you will meet with me to discuss how we might support the government's response to this public health priority. If you are agreeable to a meeting, I would be glad to speak with your office to find a time that suits you.

I look forward to hearing from you.  
Yours sincerely,  
[Sign by hand]

## Appendix 7: WHO hepatitis strategy at a glance, from WHO products to results in countries

WHO products (Attribution)		In country results (Contribution)		
Strategic axis	WHO products	Country basic operational framework		Outcome/ impact
		Plans	Results	
1. Partnership, mobilization and communication	Support for World Hepatitis Day	Hepatitis Day action	- High awareness - Absence of discrimination	- Reduced rates of new infections
	Network of collaborating centres	Centres of excellence		
	Civil society collaborations	National patient group		
	Resource mobilisation strategy	Funded national plan		
	External communication strategy	IEC strategy		
2. Data for policy and action	Disease burden estimates	Burden estimates	-Evidence based, cost-effective policy and plans	- Reduced fulminant hepatitis mortality
	Impact assessment tools	National sero-survey (s)		
	Surveillance and outbreak investigation standards	Sentinel surveillance sites		
	Country profiles	Coordination cell at MoH		
	Research agenda	National research agenda		
3. Prevention of transmission	Guidance and tools for immunization for A, B and E	EPI schedules and SOPs	-Immunization coverage increased - Safe health care - Safe sex - Harm reduction	-Improved quality of life for patients with chronic hepatitis
	Safe health care standards and tools	Blood-borne viruses prevention plans		
	Harm reduction tools for injecting drug users	Injecting Drug Users care programme		
	Safe food and water strategies	Food and water safety		
	Safe sexual practice guidance	Health promotion		
4. Screening, care and treatment	Screening and counseling resource package	National screening plans	- Infected patients identified, care provided and treated	-Reduced mortality from cirrhosis and Hepatocellular carcinoma
	Diagnostic standards	Lab SOPs and network		
	Care and treatment guidelines for B and C	National care policy/plans		
	Training package for health care providers	National curriculum		
	Equity in access to treatment and drugs	Essential medicines in list		