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351 East 52nd Street
NY 10022

Date: 12 July 2019

Dear Honorable Ambassadors,

We the undersigned have been watching with interest the development of the political declaration of the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) on 23 September 2019. We commend and support the goals of the declaration; however, we are gravely concerned by the omission of viral hepatitis in item 11.C of the latest draft of the document (*Co-facilitators' revised text REV. 3, July 3 2019*).

We urge you to include viral hepatitis in the declaration alongside the mentions of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria to bring it in line with Sustainable Development Goal 3.3 which explicitly includes all four.

Viral hepatitis is an international health crisis. According to the World Health Organization "*Viral hepatitis B and C affect 325 million people worldwide, leading to about 1.4 million deaths a year. It is the second major killer infectious disease after tuberculosis, and nine times more people are infected with hepatitis than HIV.*

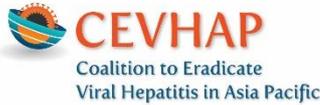
"Together, hepatitis B and C account for the highest number of new infections from major infectious diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis."

At the 69th World Health Assembly in 2016, 194 governments committed to eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030. Advancements in the diagnostics and treatment for hepatitis B and the cure for hepatitis C have provided us with the tools needed to reach elimination. However, few countries are on track to achieve this goal. Giving viral hepatitis its rightful place within this declaration will help build the global momentum to make this goal a reality.

Omitting viral hepatitis from the UHC political declaration would be sending a clear message of ambivalence to the 325 million people living with viral hepatitis and will be indicating to countries that viral hepatitis should not be a priority for their national health agendas. This is a dangerous and misguided omission. If no action is taken on viral hepatitis, by 2040 it will account for more deaths than HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria combined, costing countless lives and adding additional future costs to health systems.

We therefore respectfully request that item 11.C be amended to read “with regard to emerging and re-emerging diseases, non-communicable diseases, mental disorders and other mental health conditions as well as neurological disorders, communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria *and viral hepatitis*, antimicrobial resistance...”

Yours Sincerely

 <p>AASLD AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LIVER DISEASES</p>	 <p>ACHIEVE ASSOCIATIONS COLLABORATING ON HEPATITIS TO IMMUNIZE AND ELIMINATE THE VIRUSES IN EUROPE</p>	 <p>CDA Center for Disease Analysis</p>
<p>The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD)</p>	<p>Associations Collaborating on Hepatitis to Immunize and Eliminate the Viruses in Europe (ACHIEVE)</p>	<p>Centre for Disease Analysis (CDA)</p>
 <p>CEVHAP Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific</p>	 <p>PLUS COALITION INTERNATIONALE SIDA</p>	 <p>CLINTON HEALTH ACCESS INITIATIVE</p>
<p>Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific (CEVHAP)</p>	<p>Coalition PLUS</p>	<p>Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)</p>
 <p>Correlation European Harm Reduction Network</p>	 <p>DNDi Drugs for Neglected Diseases <i>initiative</i></p>	 <p>EASL The Home of Hepatology</p>
<p>Correlation European Harm Reduction Network</p>	<p>Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi)</p>	<p>European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)</p>
 <p>ELPA European Liver Patients' Association</p>	 <p>idpc</p>	 <p>ssdp Start making sense™</p>
<p>European Liver Patient' Association (ELPA)</p>	<p>International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)</p>	<p>Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP)</p>

		
<p>Treatment Action Group (TAG)</p>	<p>Treat Asia</p>	<p>UNITE</p>
		
<p>World Hepatitis Alliance</p>		