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**CDC'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION PRACTICES (ACIP) UNANIMOUSLY
RECOMMENDS HEPATITIS B VACCINATION FOR ADULTS 19-59**

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS – On November 3rd, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended universal hepatitis B vaccination for all adults ages 19 to 59 in the U.S., and for adults 60 and older who are at high-risk for hepatitis B.

Adults 60 and older that have no known risk factors for hepatitis B are recommended to follow [risk-based guidelines](#) to determine if they should receive the vaccine.

Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver that affects up to 2.4 million Americans in the U.S. It can lead to significant liver complications, such as cirrhosis, and liver cancer. The hepatitis B vaccine is highly effective at preventing infection. However, many US adults over the age of 30 have not been vaccinated against hepatitis B. The updated guidelines provide an opportunity to increase low adult vaccination rates and to make progress towards the national goal of eliminating viral hepatitis in the U.S. by 2030.

Hepatitis B disproportionately affects Asian and African immigrants, with 1 in 12 Asians and 1 in 10 African immigrants living with hepatitis B. Only 31.7% of nearly 2,000 Asian individuals surveyed in Chicagoland received at least one dose of the hepatitis B vaccine, with the Mongolian community having the lowest rate at 10.5%. In another survey of 207 Black immigrants in Chicago, only 16.5% had been vaccinated for hepatitis B.

“Our Asian and African immigrant community members stand to benefit immensely from this new recommendation, not only in preventing illness and extending longevity, but improving the health of generations to come,” says Naomi Louie, MPH, RDN, LDN, Senior Program Manager of Chronic and Infectious Diseases at the Asian Health Coalition. Currently under the management of Louie, the *Don't Let Hep B Win Campaign* is in its 9th year of reaching and educating Asian and African immigrant communities and referring community members to get screened, vaccinated, and treated for hepatitis B. “We are excited to see this recommendation help to overcome stigma and barriers of access and affordability that we have long been fighting,” Louie adds.

Public health organizations across the country have played an important role in highlighting the need for universal adult hepatitis B vaccination. Community groups and patient advocates have spent months advocating and building support for the recommendation.

Before this vote, adult hepatitis B immunization guidelines had not been updated in over a decade. The previous guidelines were stigmatizing and did not capture all who might be at risk. Universal vaccination helps to eliminate the burden placed on patients and providers, as well as financial and systemic barriers to vaccine access.

Why is universal hepatitis B vaccination being recommended now? As many as 60 million Americans spanning 3 generations – Baby Boomers, Gen X, and some Millennials – were born before the guidelines for universal infant vaccination in 1991 and may not be protected against hepatitis B. Many people who

have been infected do not have clear risk factors or may not be aware of the risk, and almost 85% of adults in the U.S. fall into a higher-risk group, including those with diabetes and kidney disease. Hepatitis B cases in the U.S. rose by 11% between 2014 and 2018 despite the presence of highly effective vaccines. Hepatitis B is one of the primary causes of liver cancer, one of the deadliest cancers, and it is a completely preventable disease; the need for universal vaccination can no longer be ignored.

Organization Profile

The Asian Health Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)(3) with a mission to improve the health and wellness of the Asian American and other ethnic minority communities through advocacy, technical assistance, community-based education, and research. To further address the health disparities experienced by communities of color, including Asian American, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders (AANHPI), and African immigrants, AHC and the University of Chicago Medicine formed the Center for Asian Health Equity in 2015.