

Hepatitis B Foundation strongly supports Congressional letters urging Pres. Biden to end discriminatory military policy

Rep. Mike Quigley leads the effort asking for inclusion of individuals living with well-managed hepatitis B and HIV in the military.



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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Hepatitis B Foundation, which has long fought against discrimination of people living with hepatitis B, strongly supports a new effort to permit individuals with hepatitis B or HIV to serve in the U.S. military.

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We urge President Biden to take swift action to ensure that all who wish to serve in the military can do so unimpeded.”

*Hepatitis B Foundation
President Chari A. Cohen,
DrPH, MPH*

A letter to President Biden signed by 31 members of the U.S. House calls for the Department of Defense to update their policies and personnel management instructions to reflect the most current scientific guidelines for HIV and hepatitis B management and treatment. An identical letter is being sent to President Biden by a group of U.S. Senators, led by Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware and Sen. Kristen Gillibrand of New York. These letters mark a new effort to fight this unfair policy and are a significant step forward in combating discrimination.

The House letter, which is [downloadable here](#), was led by Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05), vice-chair of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus, along with Reps. Sara Jacobs (CA-53) and Barbara Lee (CA-13). Rep. Quigley’s office issued a press release, [posted here](#).

The Members of Congress point out that people living with HBV or HIV can manage their condition with as little as one pill a day and can lead very full, long lives. Particularly given the advances in medicine for both hepatitis B and HIV, these viruses do not in and of themselves make a person less able to serve, and the risk of battlefield transmission is near zero. There is no longer any plausible argument, experts say, to deny these individuals the ability to serve their country.

Hepatitis B Foundation President Chari A. Cohen, DrPH, MPH, said: "Scientific evidence shows that people living with hepatitis B do not pose a risk to others, and that hepatitis B does not impact the ability of military students and personnel to serve. By failing to align its current policies with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense has created an inequitable environment where people living with hepatitis B and HIV are vulnerable to being discharged unnecessarily. We urge President Biden to take swift action to ensure that all who wish to serve in the military can do so unimpeded."



Dr. Chari A. Cohen, President, Hepatitis B Foundation

The Foundation has long fought against hepatitis B discrimination. In a landmark achievement, the Foundation's advocacy efforts contributed to a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice in 2013 that made hepatitis B a protected condition under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Currently, the Foundation operates a first-of-its-kind Discrimination Registry to document hepatitis B-related discrimination, offer support, and develop a plan to fight discrimination globally.

About Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus that attacks and injures the liver. Each year up to 1 million people die from hepatitis B worldwide, even though it is preventable and treatable. Hepatitis B is a "silent epidemic" because most people do not have symptoms when they are newly or chronically infected. Thus, they can unknowingly infect others and continue the spread of hepatitis B. For people who are chronically infected but don't have any symptoms, their livers are still being silently damaged, which can develop into serious liver disease such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

About the Hepatitis B Foundation: We are the nation's leading nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. Founded in 1991, the Hepatitis B Foundation is based in Doylestown, Pa., with offices in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. To learn more, go to www.hepb.org, read our blog at hepb.org/blog, follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (@hepbfoundation) or call us at 215-489-4900. To donate, contact Jean Holmes at

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