

NBCI Lends Support for President Biden's \$11.3 Billion Plan Over the Next 5 Years to Help Eliminate Hepatitis C

African Americans Continue to Die from Hepatitis C Needlessly

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Honorable Rep. Kay Granger
Chairwoman
US of House of Representative
Appropriations Committee
H-307 The U S Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Sen. Patty Murray
Chairwoman
US Senate
Appropriations Committee
154 Russell Senate Office building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Honorable Rep. Kay Granger and Honorable Sen. Patty Murray,



Rev Anthony Evans

The National Black Church Initiative is pleased to extend 100% support of President Biden's proposed spending of \$11.3 billion dollars over the next five years to help eliminate hepatitis C. We recognize there is a cure for hepatitis C, but this investment will save our nation billions of dollars in the long run. And so, this proposed spending by President Biden, is a national imperative, critically important in drastically curtailing both the mortality and morbidity of African Americans and hepatitis C and other related illnesses.

We strongly urge a bipartisan approach to work with President Biden to help make this legislation into reality for all Americans, especially for African Americans. This is one disease that we can all conquer now and narrow the health disparities a little.

African Americans are twice as likely to be infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) compared to the general U.S. population, according to the CDC. While African Americans represent only 12 percent of the U.S. population, they make up roughly 22 percent of the estimated 3.2 million persons with chronic HCV infection. Moreover, chronic liver disease, often hepatitis C-related, is a leading cause of death among African Americans ages 45-64.

Despite the seriousness of this health problem in the African-American community, too few African Americans know about the disease or get tested for it. "Early detection of chronic viral hepatitis infection can save lives," observes Dr. Ronald Valdiserri, MD, MPH, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Infectious Diseases and Director, Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Many people can get care and treatment that can limit disease progression, prevent liver cancer deaths, and help break the cycle of unknowingly transmitting the virus to others."



Rep. Kay Granger

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Eliminating Hepatitis C is our number one concern because we strongly believe we as a nation can solve this problem and move on to large challenges like cancer”

Rev. Anthony Evans

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and its 27.7 million members represent every congressional district in the country and are active voters, NBCI, a coalition of 150,000 African American and Latino churches, works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. NBCI's methodology utilizes faith and sound health science solutions to address stubborn economic and social issues.

NBCI's programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science-based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. NBCI seeks to engage with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above.

To that end, NBCI has partnered with agencies across the government to implement the Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis. The plan's goals include increasing the proportion of Americans who are aware of their viral hepatitis infection and reducing the number of new cases of Hepatitis C infection. To achieve these goals, the plan prioritizes education efforts to address viral hepatitis-related disparities and thereby reduce the disproportionate burden of Hepatitis C and increase awareness of this silent killer in the African-American community.

Here are the facts:

- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by a virus.
- Hepatitis C is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen from sharing equipment for injecting drugs, receiving blood transfusions or organ transplants before 1992, getting a needlestick injury in health care settings, and even being born to a mother who has Hepatitis C. And some people don't know how they got infected. Hepatitis C can spread through sexual intercourse, but it's rare.
- Anyone can get Hepatitis C, but African Americans – as well as people born between 1945-1965, sometimes called “baby boomers” – bear a disproportionate burden of disease.
- Most people living with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected.
- The Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) can cause chronic hepatitis, in which the infection is prolonged, sometimes lifelong. Chronic hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer. In fact, viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation.
- People living with HCV infection often have no symptoms until significant damage has been done.
- There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C infection.
- Getting a blood test is the only way to know if you have been exposed to Hepatitis C.
- New and improved treatments exist for Hepatitis C.



Rep Patty Murray

Thus, eliminating Hepatitis C is our number one concern because we strongly believe we as a nation can solve this problem and move on to large challenges like cancer. We intend to use all the strength in our toolbox to get this legislation.

We are looking forward to working with you and your colleagues on this winnable issue, a national imperative.

Sincerely,
Rev. Anthony Evans
NBCI President

Anthony Evans
National Black Church Initiative

+1 202-744-0184

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