

The Hep B Project:
Asian & Pacific Islander Capacity-Building Against Hepatitis B in Alameda County

The Problem: Hepatitis B, also known as the “silent killer” because it has few symptoms, is one of the most common diseases in the world and can eventually lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. It affects 350-400 million people worldwide even though a vaccine for the virus has been available for two decades. 1 in 1000 in the general population is chronically affected, but in the Asian & Pacific Islander (API) community, 1 in 10 is chronically affected.¹ The prevalence of Hepatitis B among APIs has been called “the greatest health disparity that exists between APIs and the general U.S. population.”¹

The San Francisco Bay Area has one of the highest populations of APIs in the country. However, little progress has been made in screening the largely linguistically isolated² API population of Alameda County that is expected to constitute 28.8% of the county’s population by 2020.³ Alameda County only has a Perinatal Hep B Program and **practically no clinics** providing free screenings to a population that is more likely to be uninsured compared with the rest of the county.⁴ The **lack of resources** available and the insufficient number of organizations helping API communities serve as obstacles for any effort to tackle this health issue.

Nevertheless, in the past couple years, San Francisco, which also has a high API population, has shown that these obstacles can be overcome. San Francisco has managed to establish multiple sites for free screenings of Hepatitis B that are offered several times a week and conducts considerable outreach efforts through community leaders and the media to reach APIs. The disparity in progress towards a Hep B free county between San Francisco and Alameda County is glaring even though the two counties are merely separated by a few miles of water.

The Project: The goal of the project is to jump start the fight against Hepatitis B in Alameda County through the collaboration of people and organizations that already exist – that is, capacity-building. Capacity-building is defined by the United Nations as “*the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular), human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems.*”⁵ The project will consist of three goals that will be accomplished with the help of existing organizations and people.

1. Educate and Organize the API Community in Alameda County About Hepatitis B

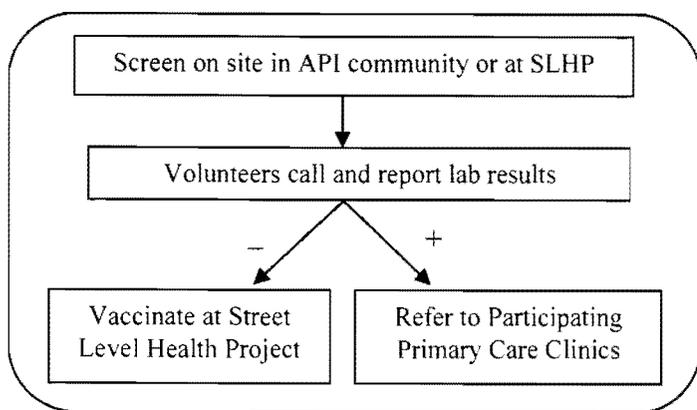
Plan: Student outreach volunteers will contact individual community leaders in each ethnic group that makes up the API population and with their help, train volunteers within each community group willing to help educate about Hep B and eventually organize their community for screenings and

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vaccinations. This will help minimize the language barrier and allow the project to be culturally competent for each targeted community. When it comes time to organize for Hep B on-site screenings, I plan to use flyers, door-to-door advertising, and existing community organizational structures such as faith groups and cultural centers to help promote turn-out for Hep B screenings.

2. Screen and Vaccinate API Population in Alameda County

Plan: Organize as many free on-site Hep B screenings (hopefully around 5-10) as possible in order to reach as many API ethnic communities as possible. Optimally, community leaders will find a community space to hold these on-site screenings on one day during the weekend. If not, the screening day will take place at Street Level Health Project (SLHP) in Oakland. Kathy Ahoy, a public health



nurse I am working with, is currently in talks with Stanford University in pursuit of a collaboration to provide on-site free screenings in addition to a doctor who has already volunteered to help perform screenings and vaccinations. Those that miss or cannot make on-site screening dates will be advised to go to SLHP in Oakland to get screened.

After screenings, volunteers will call those screened with their lab results. Those with positive results will be referred to Asian Health Services or the Perinatal Hep B Program if they do not have a primary care provider. Volunteers will ensure that all patients that test positive will have a medical home to receive follow-up care. Those with negative results will be provided free Hepatitis B vaccinations at Street Level Health Project in Oakland on Mondays and Wednesdays during clinic hours. A database with all persons who were screened and their results/vaccination step will be created to keep track of the status of each person so that those vaccinating will have a patient history. All patient information will be protected and kept confidential in accordance with California state laws.^{6, 7}

3. Sustainability: Establish Relationship with API Community and Create Task Force

Plan: By creating awareness about Hepatitis B and reaching out to isolated API communities I also hope to educate the API population about existing health resources such as the API Wellness Center and Asian Health Services so that the API population knows there are places to go get help even if they do not have health insurance, are low-income, or do not speak English.

I also plan to establish a task force (which the API Wellness Center has already expressed interest in) consisting of bay area health organizations to ensure the sustainability of this project into the future with a lead organization that will take over the responsibilities after I graduate. Also, in

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order to help secure future funding from other sources, data will eventually be compiled, with the help of an epidemiologist, to find out the prevalence of Hep B within the Alameda County API population.

- Partners:**
- Kathy Ahoy, Alameda County Public Health:** Alameda County Public Health Nurse, who will supply the project with API community leader contacts in Alameda County, provide consultation and technical assistance, and act in a mentorship role to the project. She and **Dr. William Wallin**, a physician at Street Level Health Project Health Clinic, will perform/supervise screenings on site and give vaccinations during Street Level Health Clinic hours on Mon/Wed.
 - SF Hep B Collaborative at Berkeley (SFHBC):** UC Berkeley student group that volunteers at SF Hep B clinics will provide volunteers to go out to different communities to educate the population and help train organizers within individual communities. SFHBC will also help call those screened with lab results.
 - Team HBV:** UC Berkeley Hepatitis B advocacy club, which promotes Hepatitis B awareness on the Cal campus, will help with outreach and provide handouts.
 - API Community Organizers:** will be trained by other project partners to educate their own community about Hepatitis B and organize for eventual Hep B screenings in their community while sensitive to the specific cultural background.
 - VietHepBFree:** existing Hep B awareness organization in San Francisco that will assist in outreach.
 - Street Level Health Project:** free health clinic in Oakland will provide clinic space for Hep B screenings and serve as a permanent site for Hep B vaccinations.
 - Asian Health Services:** Primary care and medical home for those who don't have health insurance will provide and share translated materials in various Asian languages. Those that receive positive lab results for Hep B will be sent here (if needed) in order to get into the healthcare system for treatment.
 - Prenatal Hep B Program:** will follow up women who test positive for HBsAg.

Timeline

December 2008 – September 2009 Contacting organizations that might be interested in helping outreach, screen, or vaccinate the API community. The more organizations involved in the project, the more people will be reached.

January – April 2009 Identify community leaders in different API populations within Alameda County with help from Kathy Ahoy. Recruit potential community organizers and train them to educate others about Hep B and how to organize their community. Organize partners for goal #2.

April – June 2009 In conjunction with community organizers, SFHBC, VietHepBFree, and Team HBV, devise a plan to first educate API communities about Hep B and then set dates and locations for on-site screenings. Finish setting up system for goal #2.

June – September 2009 Begin extensive outreach through community organizers, SFHBC, VietHepBFree, and Team HBV. Possible use of media if there is money available. Begin on site screenings. Organize meeting with several health organizations in the area to create a task force that will establish a plan for the continuation of this project into the future after I graduate.

September 2009 – April 2010 Continue on site screenings throughout the year, call patients with their lab results, and provide vaccinations at Street Level Health Project.

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April 2010 – Future Begin handing over coordination and running of project to lead organization and task force

Budget

Educational Materials	
Brochures, Flyers, Forms	650.00
Hep B information pamphlets in different languages (provided by Team HBV, VietHepBFree, and Asian Health Services)	0.00
Medical Supplies	
300 Screenings (by Quest labs)	6255.00
Blood draw	2.85
Hep A ab	9.50
Hep Bs ab	4.25
Hep Bs Agn	4.25
Vaccines (provided by Kathy Ahoy)	0.00
Gloves, band-aids, alcohol wipes, etc. (provided by Kathy Ahoy)	0.00
Transportation Reimbursements (for volunteers, e.g. gas or BART)	300.00
Stipends (in the form of food and supplies reimbursements)	
~10 API community organizers	400.00
~6 Phone volunteers that deliver test results (from SFHBC)	100.00
Outreach Volunteers (from SFHBC and Team HBV)	200.00
Permanent Screening/Vaccinating Site (provided by SLHP)	0.00
Emergency Fund	2095.00
TOTAL	10000.00

Note:

The budget on the left is the bare minimum needed to outreach, screen, and vaccinate up to 300 patients. However, the target group involves the entire API population in Alameda County and therefore additional grants are being pursued in order for the project to have the capability to screen everyone.

Sources

1. <http://www.sfhepbfree.org/home.php?nv=1>
2. API Youth Violence Prevention Center: National Council on Crime & Delinquency, *Under the Microscope: Asian and Pacific Islander Youth in Oakland*. Oakland, CA, August 2007 Data Report. Pg. 12.
3. State of California, Department of Finance, *County Population Projections with Age, Sex and Race/Ethnic Detail*. Sacramento, CA, December 1998; Population Projections Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau.
4. API Youth Violence Prevention Center: National Council on Crime & Delinquency, *Under the Microscope: Asian and Pacific Islander Youth in Oakland*. Oakland, CA, August 2007 Data Report. Pg. 11.
5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacity_building
6. AB-211: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=ab_211&sess=PREV&house=B&author=jones
7. SB-541: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=sb_541&sess=PREV&house=B&author=alquist