



MEDIA ADVISORY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Asian Heritage Month Festival and National Hepatitis Awareness Day May 6, 2017 at Chinatown Square, Chicago**

**May 6, 2017, Chicago** – May is Asian Heritage Month and Hepatitis Awareness Month, and May 19th is National Hepatitis Awareness Day. The Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA)-Hepatitis Coalition of Illinois, in partnership with more than 30 organizations, announces the celebration of Asian Heritage Month and National Hepatitis Awareness Day event on May 6, 2016.

Hepatitis B is a serious global health problem that affects Asians disproportionately. Chronically infected persons are at high risk for cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure, all of which kill about 1 million people each year. More than half of the estimated 1.4 million to 2 million people infected with hepatitis B in the U.S. are Asian American. Asian Americans are nearly three times more likely to develop liver cancer than Americans of non-Asian descent. Nearly one out of twelve Asian Americans is infected with chronic HBV, with a greater prevalence in those who are foreign born. Despite these life-threatening facts, a significant proportion of Asian Americans remain untested, untreated, and unvaccinated. Alarming, many chronically infected people are not aware that they have hepatitis B, so awareness and education is critically needed.

Hepatitis B is preventable through early detection and vaccination. The annual hepatitis awareness event is an important component of MAHA's Liver Cancer Prevention Program, funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health. The program's overall strategy is to eliminate hepatitis B as a major disease for Asian Americans. The event aims to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and increase Hepatitis B screening, immunization, and treatment rates among AAPIs, according to Dr. Hong Liu, Executive Director of the Midwest Asian Health Association.

The Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA) is a non-profit organization with the mission to reduce health disparities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in the Midwest. For more information about the Asian heritage month festival and National Hepatitis Awareness Day event, please see below:

**When:** May 6, 2017 (Saturday), 10:00pm – 2:00pm

**Where:** Chinatown Square 2133 S. China PL, Chicago, IL 60616

**Organizer:** Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA)-Hepatitis Coalition of Illinois; Chinese American Association of Greater Chicago (CAAGC)

**Co-Sponsor:** State Representative Theresa Mah, New York Life Insurance, UIC Health System

**Service Provider:** Chicago Dept. of Public Health, UIC, Midwestern Univ. Chicago State Univ. Rush Univ.

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