Don’t Let Hepatitis Stigma Stop You, Urges New Global Campaign

The yearlong effort, “#StigmaStops,” launches on Zero Discrimination Day, March 1. Here’s how you can get involved.

February 14, 2018 By World Hepatitis Alliance

“In much of the world, when a family member, health care professional or employer finds out you are living with hepatitis B or C, they start treating you differently. This fear and stigma is perpetuated by ignorance and can only be undone through education and speaking out.”

—Michael Ninburg, President of the World Hepatitis Alliance.

Stigma stops the majority of people living with viral hepatitis enjoying the quality of life they deserve. From social exclusion and inferior health care to denial of employment opportunities and verbal assaults, the stigma and discrimination stop people living with viral hepatitis from fulfilling their potential.

According to a new report published by the World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA), more than 90 percent of countries surveyed reported stigma and discrimination to some degree.

- Almost 3 in 4 respondents suffer from self-stigmatization
- Over half of respondents have been socially isolated
- 1 in 2 people have experienced unjust barriers to health care
- 42 percent have lost out on job opportunities or income

The report titled “Holding Governments Accountable: World Hepatitis Alliance Civil Society Survey Global Findings Report” found that stigma not only affects an individual’s ability to access diagnostics and treatment but also impacts their personal life, mental health and ability to work, learn and maintain relationships. Yet, despite this, very few respondents felt that their government

was effectively addressing it on a national level, making stigma and discrimination a significant barrier to the elimination of viral hepatitis.

As a community, we must come together to challenge misconceptions and be empowered to act on violations. Join us on Zero Discrimination Day—don’t let stigma stop you!

Images from the “#StigmaStops” campaignCourtesy of World Hepatitis Alliance

Global Campaign to Stop Stigma

On Zero Discrimination Day (March 1, 2018), WHA will launch its year-long global awareness-raising campaign called “#StigmaStops” in an effort to highlight the true impact of stigma, dispel myths and encourage people living with the disease to speak out.

Don’t let stigma stop you—how you can get involved:

- Share the #StigmaStops graphics on social media. Our #StigmaStops resources highlight key findings from the Holding Governments Accountable: World Hepatitis Alliance Civil Society Survey Global Findings Report and can be used throughout your activities. Don’t forget to use the hashtag #StigmaStops on social media.

- Help to highlight how widespread stigma really is. Write the hashtag #StigmaStops along with a form of discrimination you have faced on the palm of your hand and post a picture or video on social media (example here). Don’t forget to use the hashtag #StigmaStops. Your submissions will be used in a special video that we will launch on Zero Discrimination Day to call for an end to stigma.

- Want to share your #StigmaStops message anonymously? You can still be part of our Zero Discrimination Day video call if you don’t want to share your #StigmaStops message publically on social media. Just email us your photo or video at contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org.

- We can only hope to tackle stigma and discrimination if the voices of people living with viral hepatitis are heard. Our Wall of Stories welcomes stories from people living with viral hepatitis to help educate, tackle stigma and highlight the true impact of this disease. Share your experiences of stigma on our Wall of Stories here.

Join us on Zero Discrimination Day. Don’t let stigma stop you!

Images from the “#StigmaStops” campaignCourtesy of World Hepatitis Alliance

The World Hepatitis Alliance is an ambitious patient-led and patient-driven not-for-profit organization that works with governments, national members and other key partners to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and influence global change—transforming the lives of the 325 million people living with viral hepatitis and the future we share.

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