A Call to Action: Hepatitis C Awareness Month

April 5, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

There is a familiar expression, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.” I don’t know how tough I am, but I am noticing that hepatitis C treatment is slowing me down. This means resting more, asking for help, and working smart. Distraction also helps, and what better way to distract myself then to dive into more hepatitis awareness opportunities.

May is the second annual national Hepatitis Awareness Month; May 19th is Viral Hepatitis Testing Day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is promoting and providing practical tools. Today I sent an email to some community members to rally support. A copy of my email is below. Feel free to use this for your own purposes.

May I count on you to act, in some small or big way, to participate in national Hepatitis Awareness Month? If I can, then you can.

May is national Hepatitis Awareness Month; May 19th is Viral Hepatitis Testing Day. I would very much like to get something going in XXX County. Since I am in the middle of my own hepatitis C treatment, and since time is running short to do anything major, I propose taking baby steps, but doing something to raise awareness. Here is what I have in mind:

1. Identify as many people and organizations who may have a stake in issues relating to viral hepatitis, particularly hepatitis C
2. Start a conversation about what simple things we can do to promote hepatitis awareness and testing (all email - no meetings; keep plans simple)
3. Implement small goals, such as offer literature at various sites, coordinate with media, send a letter to the Union’s Other Voices and with signatures of interested parties
4. Do as much social media promotion as possible

What I’d like to come out of this is:

- We begin a conversation about what we can do to help increase awareness
- We find each other, so we aren’t alone in working on this issue
- We identify and share resources that can be used for mutual support and assistance for clients
- Use this as stepping stone to creation of a hepatitis C (or viral hepatitis) task force
- Form Facebook page for XXX County Hepatitis C Task Force

- We turn small steps into bigger steps; perhaps participate in the fall health fair
- Plan something larger for May 2014 I have access to some free printed material. (For 2014 I might be able to get a grant for testing kits)

Shareholders that come to mind are: (Ex: hospitals, clinics, harm reduction facilities and activists, college, churches)

Would appreciate your feedback, participation, and sharing of resources with me. If you could forward this email to anyone you think would be interested, even mildly so, I'd appreciate it.

Hope to hear from you soon.

(name)

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