Request a Hepatitis Awareness Month Proclamation

May 4, 2015 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

In observance of Hepatitis Awareness Month, in May I will post to this blog daily, suggesting ways we can help raise awareness about issues surrounding hepatitis C.

Ask your mayor or local governing body to issue a proclamation recognizing May as Hepatitis Awareness Month and/or May 19 as Hepatitis Testing Day. The CDC provides information on how to do this. After you get the proclamation, send a press release about it to your local paper.

Here is a past proclamation:

Here is the letter of request that I wrote:

Mayor Jason Fouyer and Grass Valley City Council
The City of Grass Valley
125 East Main St.
Grass Valley, CA 95945

April 2, 2015

Dear Mayor Fouyer and City Council,
Hepatitis B and C are leading causes of liver cancer and liver transplants in the US. An estimated 4.4 million Americans are living with chronic hepatitis; most do not know they are infected.

Hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne virus in the U.S. People born from 1945 through 1965 are five times more likely to be infected with hepatitis C than other adults. We aren't certain how many Grass Valley residents have hepatitis C, but I estimate there are at least a few hundred. Since the median age of Grass Valley residents (43.2) is older than California's 32.1, I believe we have more baby boomers. More baby boomers mean more hepatitis C.

In May 2013, Mayor Miller, City Council and you as Vice-Mayor issued a proclamation declaring May as Hepatitis Awareness Month and May 19th as Hepatitis Testing Day. I am requesting you act on this again. Here are some facts:

Hepatitis C

- Since 2007, more Americans die from hepatitis C annually than from HIV.

- Nearly 3 in 4 Americans with hepatitis C were born from 1945 through 1965; the CDC recommends testing all people born in those years.
- The rate of new hepatitis C infections is increasing, primarily among teens and young adults.
- Most people living with hepatitis C do not know they are infected, and can live with for decades without having symptoms or feeling sick.
- Hepatitis C is curable; left untreated, it can cause serious liver damage and liver failure.

Hepatitis B

- An estimated 1.2 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B in the US.
- 1 in 12 Asian Americans has hepatitis B.
- Asian and Pacific Islanders make up 5 percent of the U.S. population but account for over 50 percent of Americans living with hepatitis B.
- The CDC recommends all people born in Asia and the Pacific Islands get tested for hepatitis B.

Thank you for considering this matter. If you do issue a proclamation, let me know if you would like an electronic version of this letter, which may ease the process. Also, I included a copy of the May 2013 proclamation.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could make Grass Valley hepatitis-free? A proclamation is a good first step.

Sincerely,
Lucinda K. Porter, RN
Address
Phone #
Email

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