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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

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July 28, 2017 is World Hepatitis Day In Kentucky

52 Weeks of Public Health Campaign Spotlight: Hepatitis, the Silent Killer

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 27, 2017) – As part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department of Public Health (DPH) within the Cabinet of Health and Family Services (CHFS) is highlighting World Hepatitis Day. This is in honor of the birthday of Dr. Baruch Blumberg (1925 – 2011) and his discovery of the Hepatitis virus in 1967, which led to his development of the first Hepatitis B vaccine in 1969. For these achievements, Dr. Blumberg was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Chronic Hepatitis infections can cause inflammation of the liver that can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and death. Viral Hepatitis is among the top 10 infectious disease killers. Both chronic Hepatitis B and chronic Hepatitis C virus infections cause approximately 80% of the world's liver cancer. Viral Hepatitis is a major global health threat with approximately 350 million people worldwide living with chronic Hepatitis. Estimates are that about 20,000 Kentuckians could be living with chronic Hepatitis B and about 60,000 Kentuckians could be living with chronic Hepatitis C virus infections.

“A coordinated, comprehensive approach for early detection with screening, linkage to care, and treatment can improve the prognosis, and decrease the mortality and morbidity of viral hepatitis throughout the Commonwealth..” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Hiram J. Polk, Jr.

Kathy Sanders, the Kentucky Viral Hepatitis Prevention and Control Program Coordinator, is part of a board which includes The University of Louisville, KentuckyOne Health, Orasure, and others (Kathy insert here) planning the first World Hepatitis Testing Day activities in Louisville.

“The first year, we are concentrating our efforts in Louisville at over 20 hepatitis-testing sites throughout Louisville in community settings. This year is a model for upcoming years and we are hopeful to expand our activities to other sites next year.”, said Kathy Sanders.

More information is available at this link: <http://www.kentuckyonehealth.org/hepatitisday>

Video is available at this link. (Dr. Hoven's UTube Video)

Throughout the planned 52 Weeks of Public Health promotion, DPH will spotlight a specific public health issue. Additional information about the campaign is available on the DPH website: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/default.htm> and will be posted on the CHFS Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/kychfs> where Kentuckians are encouraged to like and share posts among their networks of friends.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.