



On 19th May 2009 the World Hepatitis Alliance will coordinate the second truly global World Hepatitis Day. World Hepatitis Day 2008 laid the foundations for sustained global disease awareness, and the aim for 2009 is to continue to raise awareness of viral hepatitis B and C around the globe – two diseases which together affect one in 12 people worldwide and kill approximately 1 million people every year<sup>1</sup>.

## How did World Hepatitis Day start?

World Hepatitis Day was launched in 2008 in response to the concern that chronic viral hepatitis has nowhere near the level of awareness nor the political will to tackle it that is seen in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This is despite the fact that the numbers chronically infected with, and annually killed by, the hepatitis B and C viruses are on the same scale. In 2008, World Hepatitis Day generated massive public and media interest, as well as support from governments, high-profile Non-Governmental Organisations and supranational bodies such as the World Health Organization. In its first year, more than 160 events took place around the world, from rock concerts to press briefings, and ministerial meetings to fundraising events.

World Hepatitis Day received formal endorsement from several governments, including those of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, China, Scotland and the UK. It also received endorsement from organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, GAVI Alliance and the Pan American Health Organisation.

## What is the World Hepatitis Alliance?

World Hepatitis Day is coordinated by the World Hepatitis Alliance, a Non-Governmental Organisation established in 2008, representing over 200 hepatitis B and hepatitis C patient groups from around the world. As a coalition of advocacy groups, the World Hepatitis Alliance is a global voice for the 500 million people worldwide living with chronic viral hepatitis B or C. The aim of the World Hepatitis Alliance is to provide global leadership and support action that will halt the death toll and improve the lives of people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C. Through better awareness, prevention, care, support and access to treatment, their ultimate goal is to work with governments to eradicate these diseases from the planet. The World Hepatitis Alliance is governed by a representative board elected by patient groups from seven world regions: Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, Africa, North America, South America, Australasia and Western Pacific.

**World Hepatitis Alliance** – seeking a world without viral hepatitis B and C.

## Will one day change the world?

No! The World Hepatitis Alliance recognises that one day will not change the world. World Hepatitis Day 2009 is a stepping stone in an incremental five year plan that will focus first on raising global awareness, and then on securing international and national support for improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and support for people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C.

## Where does World Hepatitis Day take place?

World Hepatitis Day is a global initiative. Over 200 patient groups have now signed up to support World Hepatitis Day, with representatives from Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Columbia, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tunisia, UK, US, Venezuela and Vietnam.

## For more information

For more information, including 'Am I Number 12?' campaign materials in over 40 languages, please contact the World Hepatitis Alliance at [worldhepday@fleishman.com](mailto:worldhepday@fleishman.com)

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<sup>i</sup> World Health Organization. Viral hepatitis: Report by the Secretariat. [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/A62/A62\\_22-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/A62/A62_22-en.pdf) (accessed May 11, 2009)