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AAPCHO Encourages Participation in Updated National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan

OAKLAND, April 3, 2014 – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) encouraged community members and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (AA&NHPI)-serving organizations to provide feedback on the newly released national viral hepatitis action plan.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today released an updated plan entitled, “Action Plan for the Prevention Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis”, which provides a framework in which to address viral hepatitis nationally. The plan includes over 150 actions, to be undertaken in areas including education, surveillance, testing, care and treatment.

“We are pleased with HHS’ commitment to eradicating viral hepatitis,” said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director at AAPCHO. “We hope the next iteration of the plan will among other things, include specific language addressing communities at-risk for hepatitis B, as well as activities that increase care coordination and screening efforts.”

Estimates of those infected with chronic hepatitis B in the U.S. range from 1.4 to 2 million individuals. Out of that total, about 50 percent of those chronically infected are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Populations at-risk for hepatitis B and C often encounter barriers to care, including in cultural competency and language accessibility. This plan hopes to address some of those barriers.

“With more people gaining access to health coverage through the Affordable Care Act and better diagnosis, treatment and prevention options available, we are closer than ever to realizing our plan’s potential,” said Dr. Howard Koh, assistant secretary for health at HHS. “I am very proud to be working with such outstanding partners who are all so committed to ending this silent epidemic.”

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of 34 community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration, and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders in the U.S. For more information on AAPCHO and its Guiding Principles and Values, please visit www.aapcho.org.

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