



# BCHD PRESS RELEASE

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Baltimore City Health Department

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Baltimore City Health Department Joins With Maryland Hepatitis Coalition to Commemorate Hepatitis Awareness Month**

**BALTIMORE, MD (May 25, 2011)** – The Baltimore City Health Department joined today with members of the Maryland Hepatitis Coalition (MHC) and state and local officials to recognize National Hepatitis Awareness Month. MHC honored four Hepatitis Heroes, individuals that are involved with the care of vulnerable populations in viral hepatitis prevention and/or treatment, as well as Del. Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, who has been an advocate for the prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis. The MHC is a statewide coalition that advocates for people with hepatitis and works to eliminate hepatitis in Maryland.

“The Health Department is actively involved with the prevention of viral hepatitis through its Immunization Program, Needle Exchange Program and Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Project. We are happy to join with our partners in the Maryland Hepatitis Coalition to honor Hepatitis Heroes and to bring this issue to the forefront in an effort to fight this silent killer,” said Commissioner of Health Dr. Oxiris Barbot.

Hepatitis refers to a group of viral infections that affect the liver. The most common types are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation. An estimated 4.4 million Americans are living with chronic hepatitis; most do not know they are infected. About 80,000 new infections occur each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“MHC is an excellent example of the positive power of government and community collaboration. By honoring these Hepatitis Heroes, the Coalition is bringing more positive attention to the great work that is already being done to prevent the transmission of viral hepatitis, to care for and treat those infected with viral hepatitis, and to educate clients and the general public about viral hepatitis,” said Corinna Dan, co-chair of the Maryland Hepatitis Coalition.

The MHC’s 2011 Hepatitis Heroes Honorees are:

**Maryland Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, Maryland House of Delegates:** Del. Nathan-Pulliam has been a strong supporter of viral hepatitis prevention and care for many years. She has championed increasing funding for testing, vaccination and health services for individuals impacted by these diseases because she recognizes that a large number of people are impacted but they are not aware and they are not receiving the lifesaving services and support they need to prevent sickness and death.

**Appolonius Bama, LPN, Total Health Care, Men’s Health Center:** Within two months of taking over the lead nursing position at Total Health Care’s Men’s Health Center, Bama increased average monthly Hepatitis B vaccination fourfold and is an advocate for viral hepatitis prevention.

**Frank Parish, RN, CIC, Baltimore City Detention Center:** Parish implemented the adult Hepatitis B vaccination program for the Baltimore City Detention Center and has been vigilant in offering immunization to the staff assigned to blood-spill incidents and to younger adult clients in need of Hepatitis A&B vaccinations.

**Kathleen L. Becker, DNP, CRNP Healthcare for the Homeless/Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing:** Becker has been a hands on, primary medical care provider to HCH clients for many years. She has also committed vast amounts of energy outside of her clinical time to identifying Hepatitis C as a major public health issue among HCH clients. She has worked over several years to evaluate the prevalence among her patients, revamp and standardize the care given despite limited resources, educate staff, and garner available resources – which has all led to the highest quality of care being provided to patients with Hepatitis C.

**Dr. Jonathan B. Schreiber, Healthcare for the Homeless/Mercy Medical Center:** HCH clients are medically and socially complex, and often uninsured. As a local gastroenterologist, Dr. Schreiber has opened his practice, committing time and resources, to welcome HCH clients. Dr. Schreiber has never declined a request to care for HCH clients and has ensured HCH clients receive the highest quality care.

“Healthcare for the Homeless is pleased to partner with the Baltimore City Health Department and MHC to champion viral hepatitis prevention and education in Baltimore City and across Maryland, especially among vulnerable segments of our population,” said Jeff Singer, president and CEO of Healthcare for the Homeless.

For more information on hepatitis prevention activities in Baltimore City, visit the Health Department’s Website at [www.baltimorehealth.org](http://www.baltimorehealth.org). The CDC’s Website also has additional information on viral hepatitis: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>.

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