

Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination Announces 2020 Elimination Champions
– Six Local Clinicians and Advocates from Burundi, Canada, China, Mexico, New Zealand, and Uganda
Honored for their Contributions to Advancing Hepatitis Elimination -

Atlanta, GA., July 27, 2020 – In honor of World Hepatitis Day on July 28th, the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination is pleased to announce the 2020 Elimination Champions. The 2020 Elimination Champions have devoted their lives to ensuring access to hepatitis services is equitable and have achieved major victories in securing government commitment for hepatitis programs, even in the face of many obstacles:

- **Dr. Brian Conway, Canada, Vancouver Infectious Disease Clinic**
Dr. Conway has pioneered innovative models of care to treat HCV among inner-city populations, while addressing their multidisciplinary needs. In 2013, his team began the Community Pop Up Clinic (CPC) to provide free, point of care HCV and HIV testing at community centers and shelters in Vancouver. To date, over 500 individuals who use/inject drugs have been treated for HCV.
- **Dr. David Kershenobich, Mexico, National Autonomous University of México**
In 1999, Dr. Kershenobich worked with the Minister of Health and Parliament to launch universal hepatitis B vaccination of newborns in Mexico, resulting in over 40 million children vaccinated. When new HCV curative therapies were introduced, he worked for years to expand treatment access to all Mexicans, regardless of ability to pay, leading to the establishment of the first national HCV program in October 2019.
- **Mr. Dieudonne Hakizimana, Burundi, Association pour lutte contre les hepatitis virales “ALHV”**
Since 2013, Mr. Hakizimana has pushed tirelessly for the Ministry of Health to develop a national hepatitis strategic plan and integrate hepatitis services into liver prevention activities. He persisted in this advocacy even when political tensions in the country were high and several figures from civil society were killed, imprisoned, or forced to flee the country.
- **Mr. Kenneth Kabagambe, Uganda, National Organization of People Living with Hepatitis B**
Mr. Kabagambe founded the National Organization for People Living with Hepatitis B (NOPLHB), the only patient-driven organization advocating for the rights of persons living with hepatitis B in Uganda. In 2019, he organized the first African Hepatitis Summit, which convened over 600 regional and global leaders and led to the Egyptian government’s commitment to support HCV treatment for 1 million Africans in 14 countries.
- **Mrs. Jo de Lisle, New Zealand, HealthShare Midland Integrated Hepatitis C Service**
Mrs. de Lisle, a registered nurse, developed a HCV comprehensive education, awareness, and testing initiative that involves creating a community one-stop-shop to test and treat HCV. This one-stop-shop is tailored for each community through partnerships with other health service providers and includes a seamless electronic referral system. The approach has been expanded across Midland District and has informed the National Hepatitis C Action Plan.
- **Mrs. Linda Zhang, China, Stanford Center at Peking University**
Mrs. Zhang has been a leader in eliminating hepatitis B stigma and discrimination. In 2003, she formed a collaboration with the mayor of Suzhou to ban HBV discriminatory practices city-wide, improving the lives of an estimated 600,000 persons living with HBV. She also led campaigns to provide hepatitis B catch-up vaccination to over 500,000 children and more recently launched

JoinJade, a nationwide network of student associations to educate rural and urban communities about HBV.

The Elimination Champion initiative was launched in 2019 and aims to recognize individuals' remarkable contributions to improving political commitment, policies, and programs, which help expand access to interventions and accelerate progress toward hepatitis elimination, particularly in areas with limited resources.

"These individuals demonstrate how one person can mobilize people and resources to prevent, diagnose and cure hepatitis and advance progress toward hepatitis elimination. The commitment, perseverance, enthusiasm, and innovation of these inspiring leaders demonstrates why hepatitis elimination can be achieved. We are honored to help tell their stories and bring attention to these powerful examples of hepatitis elimination in action," says Dr. John W. Ward, Director of the Coalition.

The Elimination Champion 2020 nominations were opened from May 1st to June 5th, 2020. Over 20 nominations were received from 17 countries. A panel of judges representing previous Elimination Champions, elimination program managers, the major liver disease professional associations, civil society, and donors assessed the nominations. Champions will receive awards by mail and their profiles will be added to <https://www.globalhep.org/champions>.

World Hepatitis Day

World Hepatitis Day is commemorated each year on 28 July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E. Together, hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV) are the most common, with 328 million people living with HBV or HCV globally and more than 1.3 million lives lost each year. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, viral hepatitis continues to claim thousands of lives every day. See more at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hepatitis-day/2020>.

Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination

With the availability of reliable tests, highly protective hepatitis B vaccines, effective HBV medications, and curative HCV therapies in hand, in 2016, the WHO set targets for HBV and HCV elimination by 2030. The Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination (CGHE) was launched at The Task Force for Global Health in July 2019 to accelerate progress toward these goals. Modelled after other disease elimination initiatives managed by the Task Force, CGHE aims to strengthen the capacity of national and subnational hepatitis elimination programs through advocacy, technical assistance, knowledge generation, and dissemination among partners united in a community of practice. Find out more at www.globalhep.org.

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