

Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination Names Dr. Gamal Shiha as 2021 Elimination Champion

–Dr. Shiha established the Association for Liver Patients Care and the Egyptian Liver Research Institute and Hospital that provides free medical care for underserved liver patients.

Atlanta, GA., July 23, 2021 – In honor of World Hepatitis Day, the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination is pleased to announce Dr. Gamal Shiha was selected as a 2021 Elimination Champion for his contributions to advancing hepatitis elimination in Egypt.

Dr. Shiha is a Professor of Internal Medicine, and the Head of the Gastrointestinal & Liver Unit at Mansoura University. As a clinician, he saw firsthand the burden of hepatitis C (HCV) among his patients and was inspired to create the Association of Liver Patients Care (ALPC) in 1997. ALPC provides free liver disease care and treatment to those unable to afford it. Then in 2011, he founded the Egyptian Liver Research Institute and Hospital (ELRIAH). The hospital provides treatment and medical care from more than 50,000 hepatic patients per year. It operates as a center of excellence equipped with state of art medical equipment and care.

To reach even more patients, Professor Shiha developed a community-based outreach model (educate, test, and treat) for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of hepatitis C and B infection across villages in rural Egypt. It was implemented in 100 villages across 8 governorates in Egypt between June 2015 and April 2019. Over 250,000 villagers were screened for HCV and HBV. A total of 16,500 infected patients received free treatment. Patients also received health education to promote safe behaviors and practices in the community to further reduce transmission and new infections.

Dr. Shiha was later nominated to head the Education and Scientific Committee in Parliament in 2016. Through that position, he worked with the highest levels of Government to develop the [100 Million Healthy Lives Initiative](#), a national commitment to screen all Egyptians for hepatitis C and provide treatment at no cost to patients. [This initiative has been heralded as the largest public health campaign implemented by a nation state.](#)

“The screening of all Egyptian people in less than one year was more than a dream. By doing this, I think our activities and our efforts were finally reached a point where we can say we have truly done something. I hope we will continue serving patients, especially those who cannot afford the costs of medical care,” says Dr. Shiha.

Dr. Shiha continued his work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the Egyptian Liver Hospital received 45,380 patients. More than 539 HCV patients received treatment and 6,203 patients are receiving anti-HBV treatment monthly at no cost to the patient.

In all, six Elimination Champions were selected across the world. The other chosen champions were:

- Dr. Mohammad Ali, Bangladesh
- Mr. Arafat Bwambale, Uganda
- Dr. John Dillon, Scotland
- Rachel Gonzalez and Dr. Angela Park, United States
- Dr. Alethse de la Torre Rosas, Mexico

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

“The Coalition salutes the Hepatitis Elimination Champions from six countries bound by a shared commitment to eliminating hepatitis as a health threat for their patients and communities. These Champions are committed to achieving health equity, the ultimate goal of hepatitis elimination, by fighting hepatitis-related stigma, advocating for government action and expanding access to hepatitis testing and treatment through capacity building and developing simplified models of care. Because of their actions and the example they set for others, the world is that much closer to the goals for eliminating hepatitis. Congratulations and thank you,” says Dr. John Ward, Director of the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination.

The Elimination Champion 2021 nominations were opened from March 29th to May 24th, 2021. In all, 17 nominations were received from 15 countries, across all WHO regions. 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 354 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/2021>

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 in July 2019 to accelerate progress toward these goals. Modeled after other disease elimination initiatives managed by the Task Force for Global Health, 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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