UN Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis

An invitation to all Member States

On Dec 20, 2022, Egypt’s Permanent Representative, Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek, invited all Member States to join the Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis.

The Ambassador wrote:

The Group of Friends on Hepatitis Elimination is built on a foundation of building political will to promote access to hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment and seeks to provide a platform for exchanging information, best practices, models for innovation and lessons learned.

The effort to form a Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis began in September, 2022, in a side-event to the UNGA meeting in New York. This event brought together participants from more than 20 countries, including ministers of health, permanent representatives to UN missions, national hepatitis program coordinators, alongside international partners.

We’re so pleased that in our role as Secretariat, the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination is able to present our first Quarterly Report regarding the UN Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis since that call to action in September of 2022. Below you’ll find news, links and upcoming events regarding the Group of Friends’ formation, growth, and activities. If you have any questions regarding these items or other issues related to hepatitis elimination, please don’t hesitate to reach out by emailing unhepgof@taskforce.org.
As of March, 2023, eight countries have expressed a willingness to join the Group of Friends in written communications. They are joined by 25 additional countries from all six WHO regions who have joined meetings and expressed verbal support.

The Coalition will support the Ambassador and other appointed officials to lead discussions among interested member states on identifying priority activities. Member States who wish to join the Group of Friends should contact the Secretariat by emailing unhpgof@taskforce.org.

In addition to Member States, organizations with an interest in promoting global hepatitis elimination can join the group as observers. Groups with observer status will be provided with quarterly updates and invited to attend planning and formal meetings when appropriate. Organizations seeking observer status with the Group of Friends should contact unhpgof@taskforce.org.

Dr. Anthony Nsiah-Asare, Advisor on Health to the President of Ghana, shakes hands with Dr. Heba Mostafa, Deputy Permanant Representative, Egypt, to commemorate the donation of HCV medicines from Egypt to Ghana. Since this event, the medication was successfully imported, and a program to treat 50,000 people in Ghana for HCV was launched.
Kickoff Meeting 2023

The Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations launched the newly formed United Nations Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis with a kickoff meeting on February 28, 2023. Hosted by Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek, the launch attracted the participation of 60 representatives from the UN missions of more than 25 Member States. Officials from WHO New York and Geneva offices and the African Union voiced support for the group. The Ambassador thanked the Coalition for assisting creation of the group. Going forward, the Coalition will serve as secretariat of the Group of Friends.

Dr. Harvey Alter, a Nobel laureate who was awarded for his contributions to the discovery of the hepatitis C virus, also attended and called on attendees to “show wonderment that you, as an individual and as a country, could participate in the elimination of a prevalent, lethal disease.”

Members of the group expressed their shared commitment to UN sustainable development goals by eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

“‘If Egypt has managed to have that success, it can be replicated.’”

-Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek

Group of Friends Announced in The Lancet

A Letter announcing the formation of the Group of Friends appeared in The Lancet/Gastroenterology & Hepatology on Feb. 27, 2023. It was co-authored by leaders from Egypt’s Ministry of Health and the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination. Read more.
Mark your calendar: Global hepatitis events and meetings


- **Africa Health Exhibition and Conference**, June 7-10, Cairo, Egypt. Register here: [https://africahealthexcon.com/](https://africahealthexcon.com/)

- **EASL Congress 2023**, June 21-24, Vienna, Austria. Register here: [https://easl.eu/](https://easl.eu/)

**Group of Friends: Out in Front**

The Group of Friends to Eliminate Hepatitis has been featured and promoted at the following global events:

- Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver
- UNITE Parliamentarians’ Network for Global Health
- International Viral Hepatitis Elimination Meeting
- Conference on Liver Disease in Africa
- African Union/Africa CDC

**Solidarity for Hepatitis Elimination**

Participants in the Group of Friends September 2022 United Nations Side Event hold hands to express their collective support.

For more information about the Group's Secretariat, the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination, or to receive regular updates regarding hepatitis news and events from around the world, we welcome you to sign up for the Coalition newsletter by following this link.

**Connect**

- [@GlobalHep](https://twitter.com/GlobalHep)
- [GlobalHep](https://facebook.com/GlobalHep)
- [globalhep.org](https://globalhep.org)