

Press Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nova Scotia Government Delays Approval of Life Saving Hepatitis Drugs

Two new life saving drugs approved by Health Canada nearly one year ago are stalled in the approval process by the Provincial Department of Health and Wellness. Boceprevir and Teleprevir are now available federally and in five provinces and territories but no word on when these medications will be available here in Nova Scotia.

“Since 2005 nearly 2000 Nova Scotians have been diagnosed with hepatitis B and C. During the same time frame there were fewer than 100 reported new cases of HIV. The current drugs used to treat Hep C have about a 50% success rate. These new drugs, which are not yet available in NS, have proven up to 80% effective in clearing the virus. For people living with hepatitis this is a significant increase and reflects a real surge in their hopes for the future” Colin Green, Executive Director, HepNS

"Hepatitis C is a terrible disease that happens to good people" says Dr Marie Laryea of the QEII Health Sciences Centre, "For many of my patients, time is ticking. They have a window to be treated before they are too sick and that window may already be closed for some of them. That is the heart breaking truth. These Nova Scotians deserve better." Dr Marie Laryea is a Hepatologist and liver transplant specialist at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, assistant professor at Dalhousie University and sits on the HepNS Board of Directors.

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The Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia (HepNS) is joining the World Hepatitis Alliance and its members to set a Guinness World Record on World Hepatitis Day on Saturday, July 28th.

HepNS is proud to spearhead the local effort as the global hepatitis community and concerned citizens unite at multiple venues around the world to raise awareness of hepatitis on World Hep Day. HepNS invites Nova Scotians to join in their efforts to set a world record for the most people performing the “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” actions. These actions showcase the need for us open our eyes, mouths and ears to spread the word about hepatitis. By raising awareness of this serious disease we can reduce stigma, support those who have or are affected by hepatitis, and garner attention from government. HepNS joins with its members and the patient community to call on governments to do more to raise awareness and reduce stigma of hepatitis.

The HepNS Guinness World Record attempt will take place at the Helipad on the Halifax waterfront in front of Bishops Landing at 1475 Lower Water St. The location showcases our Maritime heritage and will be a great backdrop to a YouTube video of the event. Gracious permission by the Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd.

We are pleased to have Megan Leslie, MP for Halifax, Dawn Sloane, city Councillor for downtown Halifax, and Sunday Miller from Africville Heritage Trust on site, joining us as official counters in our effort to raise awareness for hepatitis.

The record attempt will take place at 12 o'clock to highlight the fact that 1 in 12 people worldwide have hepatitis. Entertainment will be provided from 11:30 am to noon as the crowds are gathering for the noontime Guinness World Record attempt.

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Other countries who will be adding their numbers to this effort include; Germany, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Malaysia, India, Romania, China, and the Ukraine.

Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia

HepNS is a charitable organization that reduces the impact of Hepatitis on Nova Scotians through support, information, and education. We offer a range of preventative education workshops to youth, health care workers and the general public to raise awareness, combat stigma and provide information on living healthier with hepatitis or while undergoing treatment.

Hepatitis is swelling or inflammation of the liver. Viral hepatitis is a group of liver diseases that can be caused by consuming contaminated water or food, use of contaminated needles or syringes, non-sterile piercing and tattooing equipment or practicing unsafe sex. The most common types of hepatitis are A, B and C.

People infected with hepatitis can experience effects ranging from mild illness to serious liver damage such as liver cancer or failure.

For further information visit: www.hepatitisoutreach.com

For further information, or to speak to a HepNS spokesperson:

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