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2. Pledge to us through a United Way donation at work.
3. Check the Sponsors section of our website for individual or corporate ideas.
4. Or, use the handy form on Page 4 of this newsletter to send in your donation.

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### A WHO RESOLUTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

On May 21<sup>st</sup> 2010 the Sixty-third World Health Assembly, which brought together Health Ministers and senior health officials from the World Health Organization (WHO) Member States, adopted a resolution urging member states to develop a comprehensive approach to the prevention and control of viral hepatitis.

The World Health Assembly has established a framework to deliver improvements in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and awareness. The resolution clearly states the need for global coordinated action to tackle viral hepatitis backed by dedicated resources. It also provides global endorsement of World Hepatitis Day as the primary focus for national and international awareness-raising efforts.

Here are just some of the eleven recommendations to member countries:

- support or enable an integrated and cost-effective approach to the prevention, control and management of viral hepatitis;
- provide vaccination strategies, infection control measures and means for injection safety for health care workers;
- use resources – financial or human – to provide technical support to strengthen health systems in order to provide local populations adequately with the most cost effective and affordable interventions that suit the needs of local epidemiological situations;
- to promote the annual observance of World Hepatitis Day.

Check out the WHO website for the complete resolution and requests of the Director-General: [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA63/A63\\_R18-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA63/A63_R18-en.pdf)

### World Hepatitis Day – One Person's Voice: “I AM A PERSON YOU KNOW”

The Northern AIDS Connection Society has been working on a Hepatitis C Project over the past 9 months to increase awareness of Hepatitis C. The organization received an additional year of funding through the Public Health Agency of Canada to continue the project. Part of this initiative involved interviewing persons that are living with or have experienced Hepatitis C.

Many people in Northern Nova Scotia living with Hep C report feeling isolated, stigmatized and discriminated against. It took a lot of courage for many people living with Hep C to come forward and even talk about their diagnosis. Over the period of interviewing we were contacted by a lady who calls herself Rose. She hides her real name for fear of people finding out who she is. Rose asked us to share her story. (see “I Am A Person You Know” on the back page)

## IN PERSON: NEW BOARD MEMBER: DR MARIE LARYEA

At the June 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia, the board and membership in attendance elected a new member to the board: Dr Marie Laryea.

Dr Marie A. Laryea received a Bachelor of Science (1995) and Medical Doctorate/Masters in Surgery (1999) from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She did residency in Internal Medicine at Dalhousie University where she eventually became Chief Resident. She continued her studies with a subspecialty in Gastroenterology at Dalhousie University in Halifax (2005) and worked in Atlantic Canada doing Locum Tenens during her training. She went on to complete a fellowship in Hepatology at Université de Montréal (2008) and then worked as an attending physician in Hepatology Services at Hôpital St-Luc/Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal and an Adjunct Professor of Medicine at Université de Montréal.

Dr Laryea became a member of the Multi Organ Transplant Program of Atlantic Canada in November 2010. She is currently an attending physician in Hepatology and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada.

In her practice, Dr Laryea is involved in the management of outpatient and inpatient care relevant to liver diseases. Dr Laryea collaborates closely with many members of the multidisciplinary team involved in caring for Maritime patients with liver disease. She is a member of the Liver Transplantation program and works closely with physicians across Atlantic Canada to help in the care



Dr. Marie Laryea

Dr Laryea is active in the field of research including clinical trials and investigator-driven research with a special interest in Portal Hypertension and Liver Transplantation. Dr Laryea is a dedicated educator and has been recognized by students and residents. She has been a frequent lecturer at the local, regional and national level, teaching medical learners and allied healthcare professionals. She is also involved in community outreach and advocacy for patients with liver disease. **Welcome to HepNS Dr. Laryea!**

## THANK YOU AUCTION 2010 DONORS AND SUPPORTERS:

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## FROM THE WEB: TIPS TO RELIEVE HCV RELATED ITCHING

An estimated 15 to 20 percent of people with chronic Hepatitis C experience the symptom of itching. Known clinically as pruritus, itching refers to the unpleasant sensation that causes the need to scratch. Whether localized to a specific region of the body, spread all over or relegated to the internal organs, pruritus is often guilty of plaguing those whose Hepatitis C has advanced to cirrhosis. Fortunately, there are many ways to reduce this potentially maddening symptom.

Pruritus and pain are closely related sensations, since the same nerves transmit the signals of discomfort to the brain. Known as the itch-scratch cycle, an area of skin that is scratched often becomes even itchier, leading to more scratching. Experts believe pruritus in people with liver disease is due to the accumulation of poisons that have not been effectively filtered by a damaged liver. When liver damage impedes the flow of bile through the liver, bile acids and bilirubin get backed up in the blood. Besides causing jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), high bilirubin levels often cause pruritus.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), pruritus from an unknown cause is also considered to be due to toxins built up in the bloodstream. This accumulation of toxic substances generates heat. According to TCM, the sensation of itching is the body's interpretation of excessive heat.

### Help for Pruritus

Because itching is such a nonspecific, seemingly innocuous event, many with Hepatitis C don't bother discussing it with their physician. However, there are many interventions to help incessant itching. Since pruritus can be severe enough to interfere with daily activities, those with a severe case are encouraged to report their discomfort to a doctor.

If necessary, a physician can prescribe an appropriate medication to relieve the itching. Some of the drugs used for pruritus include Analgesics, Antihistamines, Cholesterol lowering agents, Opioid antagonists and Antidepressants.

Here are some tips that may help reduce itching before you get in to see a doctor:

- **Don't Smoke** - Not only does smoking reduce the effectiveness of Hepatitis C therapy, but it can also lead to Smoker's Syndrome - characterized by episodes of facial flushing, warm palms and soles, throbbing headache, dizziness, lethargy, prickling sensation, joint pain and pruritus.
- **Apply Cold Packs** - Cold packs wrapped in a towel and placed over the skin cools heat and seems to relieve intense itching.
- **Stay Hydrated** - Drink sufficient amounts of water to keep the entire body hydrated.
- **Avoid Soap** - Use a non-soap cleanser such as Cetaphil or a similar substitute to prevent excessive drying of the skin.
- **A Warm Shower** - Because heat aggravates itching, make sure your bathing water's temperature is not too hot.
- **Dress Carefully** - Whenever possible, wear loose fitting clothes made from natural fabrics that breathe. This prevents excess heat from being trapped against your skin.
- **Moisturize** - Apply moisturizing creams at least twice a day. For best results, use only non-perfumed, mild moisturizers.
- **Don't Scratch** - So that you don't engage the itch-scratch cycle and don't cause damage to your skin, experiment with rubbing, vibration or applying pressure instead of scratching. Some people report good results from rubbing itchy areas with an ice cube.
- **Oatmeal** - Many get pruritus relief from taking a colloidal oatmeal bath. Colloidal oatmeal is still made from oats, but compared to breakfast oatmeal, colloidal oatmeal is ground very finely or even pulverized.

Those with Hepatitis C should be aware that feeling itchy could be a manifestation of the virus. Because it can be so disruptive, this symptom deserves attention. Besides discussing severe pruritus with your doctor, take advantage of the tips listed above to gain some respite from incessant itching.

by Nicole Cutler, L.Ac. for [www.hepatitis-central.com](http://www.hepatitis-central.com) posted February 17, 2010 (Revised)

### Hey—Let's Hear From You!

First person accounts are the most popular articles in our newsletter. To share a story, contact [Newsletter@HepatitisOutreach.com](mailto:Newsletter@HepatitisOutreach.com)

## ABOUT US

The Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia is a volunteer-driven charitable organization committed to community capacity and development, health promotion, public awareness and implementation of social support networks throughout Nova Scotia for those living with or affected by; and those at-risk of developing Hepatitis.

### Office Location

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Community Connections is a quarterly informative publication of the Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia. We welcome your comments and contributions.

### Board of Directors:

Sandra Low, Chair  
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Heather d'Entremont  
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Juanita MacPhee  
Dr Marie Laryea

### Staff

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## “I AM A PERSON YOU KNOW”

“I am a person you know. I am a person you may work with or a person you see socially or a casual acquaintance you may meet from time to time. However, I have a secret. I have Hepatitis C.”

“I look pretty normal on the outside; however, on the inside I struggle with the isolation of being diagnosed with a virus that is rife with stigma. I was diagnosed in 2007 and the rollercoaster ride that unfolded was like no other experience in my life. I was determined to battle the virus and I underwent drug therapy. Drug therapy to combat Hepatitis C is harsh and I had a 50% chance of beating the virus. I had to self-inject interferon and ingest 2,520 anti-viral pills over the period of 72 weeks. It made me extremely ill, but I persevered and was rewarded with a SVR (Sustained Viral Response) meaning I had cleared the virus.”

“On this side of the diagnosis and successful treatment I still deal with that glazed over look that I receive from people in the medical profession when I disclose my battle with Hepatitis C. Unfortunately, I am still identified by the virus I fought. There are so many Nova Scotians out there that are living with Hepatitis C. There are so many more that do not know that they are carriers of the virus. It is daunting how prevalent Hepatitis C is in our society and how little is being done for those of us who are isolated because of the stigma attached to the virus.”

“...I want others who are living with Hepatitis C to know that you are not alone because...I am a person you know. I am a person you may work with or a person you see socially or a casual acquaintance you may meet from time to time. However, I have a secret. I have Hep C.”

If issues around the perceptions of the general public are to change we have to work together to communicate needs and support to one another as a community. Only you can help to change the perception, let us help get the information where it needs to be and take one step at a time to change public perception.

Together. **Be Heard.**



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION !

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Your support allows HepNS to provide valuable education, information and support across the province of Nova Scotia.

An income tax receipt will be issued for donations of \$10.00 or more.

Donations can also be given on our website or through Visa and Mastercard by calling 902-420-1767

Please make cheques payable to Hepatitis Outreach Society and mail to:

**PO Box 29120 RPO Halifax Shopping Centre  
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