



PLAN HEALTH ADVOCACY AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE ON WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2024

Ibadan, Nigeria. Sunday, July 28, 2024 12:00 (WAT)

PLAN Health Advocacy and Development Foundation (PLAN) is proud to join the global community in observing World Hepatitis Day 2024. This year's theme, "It's Time for Action," shows the urgent need for collective efforts to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

Hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver, remains a significant global health challenge, affecting millions of people worldwide. Despite advancements in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, hepatitis continues to claim lives and strain healthcare systems. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 325 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B and C, with a significant number unaware of their condition with these infections leading to severe liver diseases, including cirrhosis and liver cancer, causing over 1.1 million deaths annually. Despite the availability of effective vaccines and treatments, hepatitis remains underdiagnosed and undertreated.

The 2024 Theme: "It's Time for Action" emphasizes the need for immediate and sustained efforts to combat hepatitis. This call-to-action targets multiple stakeholders, including governments, healthcare providers, and communities, urging them to implement strategies that can lead to the elimination of hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030, in line with the WHO's Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis.

PLAN Foundation believes that series of interventions can address the challenges posed by hepatitis to humanity. These initiatives include:

- **Awareness and Education Campaigns:** Increasing public awareness about hepatitis through targeted campaigns, educational programs, and community outreach. By providing accurate information, we aim to dispel myths, reduce stigma, and encourage testing and vaccination.
- **Increasing Access to Testing and Treatment:** Collaborating with healthcare providers to enhance access to affordable and reliable testing and treatment options. Early diagnosis and timely treatment are critical to preventing the progression of the disease and improving health outcomes.

- **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Engaging with policymakers to advocate for stronger healthcare policies, increased funding, and comprehensive hepatitis programs. Effective policies are essential for ensuring that prevention, testing, and treatment services are accessible to all.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Building partnerships with international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise. Collaborative efforts are vital for creating a unified response to hepatitis.
- **Research and Innovation:** Supporting research initiatives to develop innovative solutions for hepatitis prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Investing in research will drive scientific advancements and improve patient care.
- **Knowledge, Skills Exchange and Collaboration on Triple EMTCT:** Forging collaborative interventions in communities involving HIV and Hepatitis patients' organizations for community responses on Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B (Triple EMTCT) services which include:
 - testing for HIV, syphilis and HBV in antenatal care clinics;
 - prompt and efficacious interventions to treat women who test positive, and to prevent transmission of the infection(s) to their children;
 - counselling for women and their partners to reduce transmission risk and ensure appropriate treatment;
 - appropriately attended, safe delivery;
 - appropriate follow-up of exposed infants, including HBV vaccine birth dose;
 - optimal infant feeding; and
 - lifelong treatment and care for mothers living with HIV, or eligible for treatment for HBV or syphilis.

As we commemorate World Hepatitis Day 2024, PLAN reaffirms its commitment to a hepatitis-free future. We envision a world where hepatitis is no longer a public health threat, where everyone has access to the care they need, and where communities are empowered to take action. Together, we can turn the tide against hepatitis. It's time for action, and it's time for us to work together to make a difference. By raising awareness, advocating for change, and supporting those affected by hepatitis, we can achieve our goal of eliminating hepatitis by 2030.

For more details on PLAN Foundation's activities, kindly visit our website <https://planfoundation.org.ng/> and engage us on our social media accounts on @NG_PLAN on X (formerly Twitter), @PLANFoundationNGO on Instagram and @PLAN Foundationng on Facebook

PLAN Foundation is a member of the **International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC)** <https://www.iapac.org/about/>, the **World Patients Alliance (WPA)** <https://www.worldpatientsalliance.org/>, International AIDS Society (IAS), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) <https://gnpplus.net>, International AIDS Society (IAS) <https://iasociety.org>, the Stop TB Partnership <https://stoptb.org>, International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) <https://www.iapo.org.uk>, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (IUATLD) <https://theunion.org>, Global Health Council (GHC) <https://globalhealth.org> as well as various other relevant regional and global networks, movements and professional associations aligned with its vision of a Nigeria where the individual, family, and community are adequately empowered to protect themselves against poverty, underdevelopment, and the spread of diseases.

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