

MEDIA RELEASE

27 July 2021 –for release on 28 July

## **28 July is World Hepatitis Day: ensuring diverse communities are not left behind.**

***“LiverWELL is committed to supporting and engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in order to improve knowledge and access to liver health information.”***

As World Hepatitis Day approaches on 28 July we are reminded that awareness of hepatitis is critical - hepatitis B and C are serious health issues in the community; they can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer – the fastest growing cause of cancer if left untreated. Nearly 50,000 Victorians are living with hepatitis C and a further 50,000 living with hepatitis B – yet most of these people are not actively engaged in care and so are at risk of serious liver disease and avoidable death.

In 2021 the World Hepatitis Day theme is ‘**Hepatitis Can’t Wait**’, highlighting the need to accelerate efforts to eliminate hepatitis. Globally a person dies every 30 seconds from a hepatitis related illness – even in the current COVID-19 crisis – we can’t wait to act on viral hepatitis.

Why the urgency? People living with viral hepatitis can’t wait for testing and life-saving treatments, expectant mothers can’t wait for screening, and babies can’t wait for their hepatitis B birth dose vaccination. Those with hepatitis can’t wait to end stigma and discrimination. Decision makers can’t wait, they must act now to eliminate hepatitis.

Melanie Eagle, CEO of LiverWELL, hopes that the message of World Hepatitis Day raises the voices of people and communities affected by viral hepatitis, to fight stigma and call for positive action from policy makers to fund the fight against hepatitis.

“An important part of this fight is to ensure that information on hepatitis is readily available to everyone. And to ensure that those in diverse communities are not left behind, LiverWELL is committed to supporting and engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities in order to improve knowledge and access to liver health information,” said Ms Eagle. “We’ve developed some exciting new resources which reflect this commitment, as part of a broader focus on building our translated and language materials.”

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The liver health content on the LiverWELL website has for the first time been translated in a coordinated manner and is now available in 13 languages: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Dari, Dinka, Filipino, Hakha Chin, Hindi, Karen, Khmer, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese, with links to resources in these languages.

Recently animation videos have been released to raise awareness about Hepatitis B in four different scenarios: cooking, pregnancy, marriage, and sports, providing viewers with a good understanding of hepatitis B in simple language, about transmission, the importance of hepatitis B blood tests and vaccination, as well as healthy liver advice. These animation videos are now available in Arabic, Burmese, Mandarin Chinese, Filipino, Thai and Vietnamese in addition to English.

LiverWELL has also recently released an app which can be navigated in Arabic, Chinese, Burmese, Thai and Vietnamese as well as English. This self-management tool helps people improve their liver health, navigate the steps involved in ongoing care, and stay engaged with healthcare professionals.

Those who work with CALD communities can readily see the value of these resources. Marion Lau OAM, Secretary of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, former Victorian Multicultural Community Representative Commissioner and LiverWELL HEP Hero, recommended the translated and language resources. "They will allow people in the Chinese community as well as other linguistically diverse communities to understand their options for testing and treatment."

Dr David Phan, a passionate advocate for liver health in Vietnamese communities in the west of Melbourne, is a strong supporter of translated materials for his community. "Making information on liver health available to people in their own language allows them to take action on liver health and hepatitis, for themselves and their family."

Chris Christoforou, Executive Officer of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria said that ECCV recommends the LiverWELL translated and language resources. "These resources allow people in CALD communities to access clear and simple information about liver health."

Up to 6 Victorians die each week from viral hepatitis-related liver disease, the same number of deaths as the state road toll. The **#HepCan'tWait!** message couldn't be more timely.

Links:

LiverWELL website language translations: <https://liverwell.org.au/language-translations/>

On those page see the Videos: [Arabic](#), [Burmese](#), [Chinese](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Thai](#), [Filipino](#).

For information on the LiverWELL app go to: <https://liverwell.org.au/get-the-app/>

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