

Rep. Mike Honda Introduces Bi-partisan Bill to Boost Hepatitis Research

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Currently, more than 1.25 million Americans are infected with the disease, even though it can be prevented through vaccination and awareness. It is often called the “silent disease” because more than two thirds of those infected have no obvious symptoms.

“Sadly, we’re talking about a disease that is preventable, and treatable if it’s detected in its early stages,” said Honda, who represents the congressional district with the country’s largest Asian-American population. “This bill calls for using tools that are already at our disposal to prevent human suffering.”

One of the most affected groups is the Asian Pacific Islander community, where up to 10 percent of the population is infected with Hepatitis-B.

The bi-partisan bill, H.R. 4550, would require the development of a national plan for the prevention, control and medical management of Hepatitis-B; it would help fund immunization, counseling and education of high risk populations; and it would increase research funding for best practices for prevention, improved treatment, and more effective screening methods.

“Without appropriate screening and management of the disease, one in four Hepatitis B carriers dies from liver cancer or liver disease,” Congressman Dent said. “Early detection also reduces the likelihood that the virus will be unknowingly transmitted to others.”

The bill is also co-sponsored by Edolphus Towns (D-NY), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Michael McNulty (D-NY), and Jim Gerlach (R-PA).

For more information about the disease visit the Hepatitis B Foundation’s website at <http://www.hepb.org> }