

## San Francisco Hep B Free Mourns Loss of Hep B Virus and Vaccine Founder - Dr. Baruch Blumberg

SAN FRANCISCO, April 8, 2011 - San Francisco's Asian and Pacific Islander community is saddened by the passing of Nobel Laureate **Dr. Baruch Blumberg** who discovered the hepatitis B virus - the biggest health discrepancy facing the API community.

Blumberg received the 1976 Nobel Prize in medicine for his discovery of the hepatitis B virus, and the development of the first vaccine to fight hepatitis B. His research has had a major impact on worldwide public health and has saved millions of lives globally. He died of a heart attack at the age of 85 on April 5.

This past September, Blumberg was honored by the Chinese Hospital and San Francisco's Hep B community during the **Hep B Free Coast to Coast Awards Gala**, for his distinguished achievement in medical science. The night's event was presented by **SF Hep B Free** and **Chinese Hospital**, and produced by the **AsianWeek Foundation**.



From left to right: Meredith Bergin Bailey, Asian Liver Center, Dr. Stuart Fong, Chinese Hospital, Dr. Baruch Blumberg, Dr. Joseph Woo, Chinese Hospital, Ted Fang, AsianWeek Foundation & SF Hep B Free, Janet Zola, SF Department of Public Health & SF Hep B Free, and John Fisher, Brown and Toland Physicians Group at the Hep B Free Coast to Coast Gala on Sept. 16, 2010. Photo by Frank Jang.

"Dr. Blumberg has made one of the largest impacts on world health by discovering the Hep B virus and subsequently the hepatitis B vaccine," said Dr. Joseph Woo, former Chief of Staff of Chinese Hospital. "We are thankful for the opportunity to have met and honored him with the Chinese Hospital's 37th Annual Award. Without his extraordinary discovery, we would not be able to continue our work and efforts to educate the community on the silent dangers of Hep B."

"The Asian and Pacific Islander community is forever indebted to our Hep B Hero Dr. Baruch Blumberg," said Ted Fang, AsianWeek Foundation and co-founder of SF Hep B Free. "He discovered the largest health issue facing the Asian community today and he will be missed."

### **About Hepatitis B** (source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

There are more than 43,000 new Hepatitis B cases in United States each year, with the greatest incidence among adults between ages 19-49 years old. Hepatitis B is one of the leading health disparities between Asians and non-Hispanic whites. Among the Asian population the predominant mode of transmission is from infected mother to child during the birthing process. Hepatitis B can also be spread through unprotected sex and shared needles. There is a safe and effective vaccine to protect against infection from Hepatitis B.

### **About San Francisco Hep B Free**

San Francisco Hep B Free is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between city government, private healthcare community organizations and businesses. The campaign's goal is to make

San Francisco Hepatitis B-free by (1) creating public and healthcare provider awareness about the importance of testing & vaccinating Asian and Pacific Islanders for Hepatitis B; (2) promoting routine Hepatitis B screenings and vaccinations within the primary care medical community; and (3) facilitating access to treatment for chronically infected individuals. The SF Hep B Free Steering Committee is made up of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University and the Asian Week Foundation. For more info, please go to [www.sfhepbfree.org](http://www.sfhepbfree.org).