

PRESS RELEASE

World Hepatitis Alliance (the Alliance), European Liver Patient Association (ELPA) and Bristol-Myers Squibb Announce Global Expansion of PATH B Programme on World Hepatitis Day to Address the Unmet Need in Resources for People Living with Chronic Hepatitis B

Patients and Professionals Acting Together for Hepatitis B (PATH B), www.pathb.com, provides the most comprehensive information and tools available for those at risk and diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B

PATH B expands roll-out to six countries and is now available in the [UK](#), [Italy](#), [Portugal](#), [Russia](#), [Spain](#), [Taiwan](#) and [Turkey](#)

[Paris, 26 July 2012] – The [World Hepatitis Alliance](#) (the Alliance), [European Liver Patients Association](#) (ELPA) and [Bristol-Myers Squibb](#) announced today that the successful [PATH B](#) programme has been expanded to support patients living with chronic hepatitis B in a further six countries, with additional countries under consideration.

Since the launch of PATH B in the UK in October 2011, the programme has received a large number of requests for it to be available in other countries. This demonstrates that credible, accurate patient resources are highly sought after by not only patients, but also physicians, in a disease area where little or no resources exist.

PATH B is provided as an educational service by the Alliance and ELPA, and is organised and funded through an unrestricted grant by Bristol-Myers Squibb. The programme is managed by an independent advisory board consisting of patient advocacy group representatives and leading hepatologists from across Europe.

Approximately 350-400 million people worldwide have chronic hepatitis B, an incurable disease for the vast majority of people that can lead to liver cancer.^{1,2,3,4} Despite the large incidence, there is a significant lack of credible resources available to patients and caregivers.

This resource is provided as an educational service by



Developed in partnership with

“Chronic hepatitis B patients often have limited knowledge of hepatitis B risks, transmission and how to cope with living with the disease,” said Tatjana Reic, president, ELPA. “With PATH B now available to patients in multiple countries, we are one step closer in educating people globally about how they can protect themselves from this infection.”

Chronic hepatitis B awareness and education is effective in the prevention and management of the disease, however it is not widely and consistently implemented.^{5,6,7} The goal of PATH B is to help those at risk and those already infected with chronic hepatitis B understand the virus’ risks and transmission methods and how to best manage living with the disease. The programme also aims to improve the patient-physician dialogue with the hope that this will lead to better outcomes.

“It’s time to bring chronic hepatitis B into the spotlight so the nearly 400 million people living with the virus can become fully educated on their condition. And innovative resources like PATH B are a valuable part in helping us get there,” said Charles Gore, president, the Alliance.

The new countries include Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Taiwan and Turkey. Additional countries under consideration for PATH B roll-out later in 2012 include Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, The Gulf states and South Korea.

“PATH B is an example of Bristol-Myers Squibb’s commitment to providing programmes that address an unmet need for people living with chronic hepatitis B,” said Ron Cooper, president, Bristol-Myers Squibb Europe. “We understand we have an important role to play in addressing these needs by working with patient and professional organisations, physicians and patients.”

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About PATH B

The PATH B resource was created by an international advisory board of European patient advocacy groups and physicians to address all aspects of chronic viral hepatitis B – from diagnosis to long-term treatment.

The PATH B resource is an interactive PDF that provides credible information on the complete hepatitis B journey through an animated road map illustrating the stages of disease management: before diagnosis, diagnosis, understanding test results, starting treatment and keys to successful long-term disease management. There are also printable fact sheets, wellness tips, and other features such as the patient diary, which can be personalised with medical history, treatment updates and questions for

your doctor. The “View Your Progress Tool” allows patients to chart their test results in order to view their treatment progress.

PATH B Partner Organisations

European Liver Patients Association (ELPA)	http://www.elpa-info.org
World Hepatitis Alliance (Alliance)	http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org
Deutsche Leberhilfe e.V.	http://www.leberhilfe.org
British Liver Trust	http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk
Associació Catalana de Malalts d’Hepatitis (ASSCAT)	http://www.asscat.org
Chinese Healthy Living Centre	http://www.cnhlc.org.uk
Associazione EpaC onlus	http://www.epac.it
SOS Hépatites	http://www.soshepatites.org

About Hepatitis B (HBV)

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver and can include several different types of viral infections that impact the liver’s capacity to perform its vital functions.⁸ HBV is transmitted through person-to-person contact with infected blood or bodily fluids.² The most common mode of transmission varies by geographic region. In Western Europe, a majority of infections are acquired through sexual contact with an infected person, as well as sharing contaminated needles and syringes. However, in Asia and the Middle East, HBV is spread predominantly through mother-to-child and child-to-child transmission.⁹ Most individuals suffering from HBV do not show any signs or symptoms, but they do experience a much higher risk of developing cirrhosis and liver cancer.⁸ In fact, about 15-25 percent of those affected will develop liver disease caused by HBV.⁴ There is no cure for chronic HBV, but there are treatments that can help prevent the development of more severe or life-threatening complications.³

For more information on hepatitis B, visit www.hepatitisinfo.org.

About World Hepatitis Day 2012

2012 marks the second annual World Hepatitis Day, as recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO). World Hepatitis Day is sponsored by the WHO and the Alliance. This year’s theme of “It’s Closer Than You Think” encourages people to understand that hepatitis is everywhere and could affect those close to them, or even themselves. For more information on World Hepatitis Day, visit <http://worldhepatitisalliance.org/WorldHepatitisDay.aspx>

About Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

Bristol-Myers Squibb is a global biopharmaceutical company whose mission is to discover, develop and deliver innovative medicines that help patients prevail over serious diseases. Bristol-Myers Squibb has an established expertise in Viral Hepatitis and is proud to support PATH B, a programme addressing a large unmet need for patients living with chronic hepatitis B.

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¹ Hepatitis B Foundation. Statistics. Available at <http://www.hepb.org/hepb/statistics.htm>. Accessed July 2012.

² World Hepatitis Alliance. About Viral Hepatitis. Available at <http://www.worldhepatitisalliance.org/AboutViralHepatitis.aspx>. Accessed July 2012.

³ Hepatitis B Foundation. Living with Hepatitis B: FAQ. Available at http://www.hepb.org/patients/living_with_hepatitis_b.htm. Accessed July 2012.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Viral Hepatitis Populations. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Populations/api.htm>. Accessed July 2012.

⁵ Surjadi M, et al. Formal patient education improves patient knowledge of hepatitis C in vulnerable populations. *Dig Dis Sci* 2011; 56:213-219.

⁶ Cacoub P, et al. Patient education improves adherence to peg-interferon and ribavirin in chronic genotype 2 or 3 hepatitis C virus infection: A prospective, real-life, observational study. *World J Gastroenterol* 2008; 14(40): 6195-6203.

⁷ World Hepatitis Alliance. Viral Hepatitis: Global Policy. Available at http://worldhepatitisalliance.org/Libraries/Campaign_Materials/Viral_Hepatitis_Global_Policy.sflb.ashx. Accessed July 2012.

⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. World Hepatitis Day. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/features/viralhepatitis/>. Accessed July 2012.

⁹ World Health Organization. Hepatitis B Fact Sheet. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs204/en/index.html>. Accessed July 2012.