



## Partners Unite to Support World Viral Hepatitis Day in Egypt *Free vaccines, medical services and entertainment featured at event to help prevent the spread of viral hepatitis*



May 19, 2008

Al Azhar Park, Cairo

Egypt marked World Viral Hepatitis Day with an all-day outdoor festival that featured free hepatitis B vaccinations, free consultations with medical experts, and free screening for viral hepatitis B and C and HIV, along with folkloric entertainment and activities for children. The event, organized by the National Committee for Control of Viral Hepatitis and the Ministry of Health and Population, with the support of USAID through the Communication for Healthy Living (CHL) Project, demonstrated an effective model of public-private partnership, with more than sixteen partners participating—half of them from the private sector.



More than 3,000 people turned out to take advantage of free information and services, as well as family fun—including a performance by Alam Simsim characters. The event was promoted by Al Azhar Park Management in cooperation with the NCCVH. During the week leading up to the event, the park distributed educational flyers on viral hepatitis and an invitation to World Hepatitis Day, along with their entry tickets. The event was also promoted via community programs operating in the nearby Darb El Ahmar neighborhood, and in newspapers.



With sufi dancers whirling away in the background to the delight of children and families, volunteer student peer educators from the Worldwide Health Forum staffed the information booths and distributed materials. They also distributed 1500 caps and t-shirts bearing the logo of the “Stop Viral Hepatitis” and the “Your Health, Your Wealth” umbrella campaign, provided by the CHL project.



Nurses at the Vacsera mobile clinic on site vaccinated over 620 people against Hepatitis B that day. Follow-up booster shots are being offered at the Vacsera Center for a special reduced price for those who participated. Vacsera is cooperating with the NCCVH to offer low-cost vaccination services, which are further supported by the private sector through the



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campaign. The hepatitis B vaccine was offered at no cost at the World Hepatitis Day event.

A few meters away at the MOHP Voluntary Counseling and Testing Center, nurses were busy drawing blood samples from more than 200 people who took advantage of free rapid testing for hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV. More than half of those tested were positive for either HBV or HCV. This extremely high prevalence in the voluntary test group is an indicator that at-risk populations are seeking VCT services when available. Counselors offered support and referrals, and discussed concerns and protective behaviors.

More than 1200 people, many of them with medical records or test results in hand, consulted with doctors specialized in liver disease who volunteered their services at the event. Free ultrasounds of the liver were offered on-site via private sector sponsorship to more than 100 people who were referred by the consulting doctors.

Celebrity Amr Waked joined officials from the NCCVH, the MOHP, and other partners at a seminar held during the event to showcase achievements and share plans to expand efforts to stop the spread of viral hepatitis. The NCCVH recognized partners for their multifaceted support to the Viral Hepatitis Campaign:

- The Sawiris Foundation
- Orascom Telecom
- EFG Hermes Foundation
- OTV
- Roche
- UCP
- Ask, Consult Pharmacy Network
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Alam Simsim
- Schering
- Al Azhar Park Foundation

The media has been a valuable partner throughout the "Stop Viral Hepatitis" campaign, which launched in universities earlier this year. The World Hepatitis Day event in Egypt was covered by satellite and local broadcast channels including Dream, Orbit, OTV, and ESC as well as Nile TV and print media.