

Smart + Strong Announces the Launch of HepMag.com

A comprehensive portal for people living with hepatitis and their care providers.

June 20, 2011

Smart + Strong, the publisher of award-winning community-focused health magazines and websites, announced today the launch of its newest online portal: HepMag.com. The website, created in response to the growing need for educational and interactive services for people living with viral hepatitis, provides an array of services, including comprehensive lessons, news, conference coverage and community forums.

“At Smart + Strong, we know that when you are armed with expert, unbiased health care information, when you are empowered and inspired to advocate for your needs, and when you can connect to others dealing with viral hepatitis, you are more likely to survive and thrive,” says Tim Horn, editor-in-chief of HepMag.com.

Viral hepatitis is a silent epidemic in the United States. It is estimated that 3.5 to 5.3 million Americans are living with viral hepatitis; millions more are at risk. Because viral hepatitis can persist for decades without symptoms, 65 to 75 percent of infected Americans are unaware of their status, are not receiving care and treatment and may inadvertently be spreading the virus to others.

HepMag.com is being launched on the heels of a new strategic plan, released by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to increase viral hepatitis awareness and to link people living with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection with the care and support they need. Published on May 12, 2011, the HHS’s [“Combating the Silent Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis: Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis”](#) aims to increase the proportion of people who are aware of their HBV infection from 33 to 66 percent and increase the proportion of people who are aware of their HCV infection from 45 to 66 percent.

In addition, two new hepatitis drugs, Incivek (telaprevir) produced by Vertex Pharmaceuticals and Victrelis (boceprevir) produced by Merck & Co., were recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These two drugs offer better curative options for HCV genotype 1, the most difficult to treat form of the virus—and the form that affects 70 percent of people living with the virus in the United States.

“HepMag.com was created to raise awareness of the importance of knowing one’s hepatitis status to ensure optimal health for individuals and to address a large, and growing, public health concern in the United States,” says Regan Hofmann, editorial director of Smart + Strong. “HepMag.com guides people with hepatitis through their diagnosis, care and treatment and serves as a tool for health care workers treating people with the condition.”

[Smart + Strong](#) is the parent company of an award-winning stable of magazines and their related websites including: POZ and [poz.com](#), for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS; [AIDSmeds.com](#), focused on HIV/AIDS care and treatment; Real Health and [realhealthmag.com](#), focused on African-American health; Tu Salud and [tusaludmag.com](#), focused on Latino health; and Sane and [sanemag.com](#) for people seeking mental wellness information.

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