

# WEBINAR 1 • Understanding the Global Health Sector Strategy for Viral Hepatitis: Driving National Policy Change

The first webinar in the ‘Tools for Change’ series titled, ‘Understanding the Global Healthcare Sector Strategy for Viral Hepatitis: Driving national policy change’ was held on the 16 February 2016. The webinar discussed the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis (GHSS) and how organisations can use global policy commitments as a lever for national change. The webinar was attended by 80 participants from 30 countries around the world.

The following panellists shared insights on how to effect real, on-the-ground change:



**Jeff Lazarus**

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Hepatology, Medicine and Policy and Professor, University Copenhagen, Denmark



**Raquel Peck**

**CEO**  
World Hepatitis Alliance



**Bisi Bright**

**1st Vice Chairman / CEO,**  
LiveWell Initiative (LWI)  
Nigeria



**Stefan Wiktor**

**Team Lead**  
Global Hepatitis Programme,  
WHO



**John Ward**

**Director, Division of Viral Hepatitis**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA

## Key Learnings

### Engage Policymakers

The ability to engage policymakers and create change is greatly reliant on identifying the right opportunities and making the best use of a range of tactics and materials—such as the GHSS—to call on governments to develop strategies, adopt policies and commit to increased funding.

### Utilise Policy Documents

There have been significant developments in viral hepatitis policy both nationally and globally in recent years culminating with the adoption of the first GHSS—patient advocates can use the targets outlined in the strategy and overall goal of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030, to strengthen their advocacy case to governments.

### Encourage Governments

Patient advocates should not hold back from encouraging governments to improve national strategies for combating viral hepatitis.

## Main Points

### How to use policy documents to drive national change

There is a widespread lack of awareness as to how to use policy documents to support advocacy efforts.

Resolutions, declarations and manifestos that come out of WHO, the UN and other high level policy meetings, can all be used to press governments to take action, and their potential impact should not be underestimated.

For example, the recent 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and the GHSS strategy provide an opportunity for advocates/civil society to engage with governments regarding viral hepatitis and the commitments they agreed to.

### Advocates can champion the broader dissemination of these declarations and manifestos by:

- Sending letters
- Reaching out via social media
- Organising meetings with stakeholders and policy-makers.

# WEBINAR 1 • Understanding the Global Health Sector Strategy for Viral Hepatitis: Driving National Policy Change

## CASE STUDIES

### Nigeria: LiveWell Initiative



- The Nigerian advocacy organisation 'LiveWell', utilised the 2010 World Health Assembly to approach governments and assist in convening a Strategic Focus Group Discussion (SFGD) (WHA63.18).
- This resulted in a draft Viral Hepatitis Policy for Nigeria and the establishment of a Technical Working Group.
- It also resulted in substantial media coverage in Nigeria that helped drive policy changes in the area and, although more still needs to be done, the use of policy documents helped begin the discussion.

### Centers for Disease Control: Action Plan on Viral Hepatitis



- Governments can also use policy documents to drive change. Following the publication of a report by the Institute of Medicine which called on the US government to address viral hepatitis, the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) developed an action plan addressing the barriers to improving surveillance, awareness, immunisation, and services that help those living with the disease.
- As a result, not only has more been done to prevent and treat viral hepatitis in the U.S., and government funding increased, but stakeholders and policy makers across the U.S. government are now more engaged in the issue and actively thinking and talking about viral hepatitis.

### What is the Global Health Sector Strategy for Viral Hepatitis?

- Considered the 'game changer' for hepatitis, the GHSS has a set of ambitious targets and an overall goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a major public health threat by 2030.
- The strategy outlines a set of prevention and treatment targets to **save 7.1 million lives by 2030**.
- The role of civil society in ensuring governments are meeting these targets is vital. Patient advocates can use the strategy to strengthen their case, start conversations and work with policy makers to develop a response to the strategy.

<http://www.who.int/hepatitis/en/>

## Top tips for using policy documents to impact change:

### Identify Key Messages/Commitments from the following policy documents that support your cause to change policy around viral hepatitis in your area.

- WHO: Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis 2016-2021
- World Health Assembly resolutions: WHA63:18 and WHA67.6.
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Glasgow Declaration on Viral Hepatitis

### Develop materials based around these key messages including:

**WRITE A LETTER...**to your hepatitis focal point/health minister explaining the situation surrounding viral hepatitis in your area, using the key messages to strengthen your case. Suggest arranging a meeting to discuss the issue in more detail.

**DRAFT A PRESS RELEASE...**to send to your local news outlets, encouraging them to draw attention of the issues. Highlight the shocking statistics and issues in your area despite your government's commitment to addressing them (point to WHO Resolutions).

**CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN...**posting about key facts and statistics around viral hepatitis in your area, to increase public awareness of the situation.