

PRESS RELEASE

“PATH B”: A Comprehensive Support Programme in Europe for Patients Diagnosed with Chronic Hepatitis B Launched

- *Hepatitis B is one of the most common infectious diseases in the world, with 350 million people worldwide being chronically infected¹ - this compares with 33 million people living with HIV infection² - yet there remains a lack of reliable resources for hepatitis B patients and caregivers*
- *PATH B - “Patients and Professionals Acting Together for Hepatitis B” (www.pathb.com) - is a new programme that provides information and tools to guide patients through their journey with chronic hepatitis B from diagnosis to long-term disease management*

Paris, France, 21 October 2011 – A pioneering educational resource, designed to improve the lives of people living with chronic hepatitis B, was launched today at an annual conference organised by Bristol-Myers Squibb in Hong Kong where 26 patient advocacy groups from 14 countries and regions gathered to discuss viral hepatitis.

The **PATH B** (“**P**atients and **P**rofessionals **A**cting **T**ogether for **H**epatitis **B**”) programme was developed by an international advisory board comprising people living with hepatitis B, as well as patient advocacy group representatives and leading hepatologists from across Europe. This programme is provided as an educational service by the World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA) and The European Liver Patients Association (ELPA). The programme was organised and funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb.

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) also welcomed “the scope of the information the Path B resource provides to patients”.

Professor Mark Thursz, Secretary General of the European Association for the Study of the Liver commented: “This resource provides comprehensive and reliable information for patients diagnosed with hepatitis B. I have no doubt that PATH B will help patients to be better informed, empowered and equipped to manage their treatment journey.”

This resource is provided as an educational service by



Developed in partnership with

The core component of the PATH B programme is a patient-centric resource, PATH B – My journey with chronic hepatitis B. This extensive interactive educational resource consists of a hepatitis B journey roadmap that guides patients through every step and aspect of hepatitis B and treatment options. The six stages of the roadmap cover key aspects of a patient's journey with essential information from diagnosis to long-term disease management.

“There is a large information gap for chronic hepatitis B patients between their initial diagnoses and the long-term management of their disease,” said PATH B advisory board member, Achim Kautz, ELPA Board Member. “For the first time, this toolkit seeks to fill that unmet need for complete and reliable information that patients can depend on through every step of their disease.”

An innovation contained within the PATH B resource is the online diary where patients can record notes, test results, write in medical appointments as well as any disease or treatment related problems they may experience. The resource contains also a ‘View Your Progress’ tool, which, for the first time, allows patients to plot their test results over time and to chart the progress of their treatment. The aim of this tool is to help patients understand their treatment, therefore aiding adherence.

Charles Gore, President of the World Hepatitis Alliance, praised the resource: “PATH B is the first of its kind in terms of the range of patient materials available in such a portable interactive format. It really does provide practical help for patients.”

The PATH B resource was also designed to facilitate better patient-physician dialogue, and to provide trustworthy information.

“As a clinician, I have seen that patients who are more knowledgeable about their disease feel empowered and in control and tend to have better outcomes,” said PATH B advisory board member, Dr. Mark Wilkinson of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, London, UK.

Although this resource was developed primarily for patients it can also be a helpful tool for physicians to enhance dialogue with patients on disease progression, treatment and the importance of adherence and persistency.

The advisory board members included representatives from the following:

- European Liver Patients Association (ELPA) - www.elpa-info.org
- World Hepatitis Alliance (Alliance) - www.worldhepatitisalliance.org
- British Liver Trust - www.britishlivertrust.org.uk
- Associació Catalana de Malalts d'Hepatitis (ASSCAT) - www.asscat.org
- Chinese Healthy Living Centre - www.cnhlc.org.uk
- Associazione EpaC onlus - www.epac.it
- SOS Hépatites - www.soshepatites.org
- Deutsche Leberhilfe e.V - <http://www.leberhilfe.org>
- Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation, London, UK
- General University Hospital, 'Ippokratio', Athens, Greece

To view and download the English version of the PATH B education resource please visit www.pathb.com. More language versions, including German, French, Spanish, Italian, traditional Chinese, Turkish, Portuguese and Russian will be launched early next year.

Media Contacts:

Raquel Jose, International Relations Director, **WHA** (World Hepatitis Alliance)
Tel: 00 44 7920 202 120 Email: Raquel.Jose@worldhepatitisalliance.org

Achim Kautz, Board member **ELPA** (European Liver Patients Association)
Tel: 00 49 1 784429570 Email: akautz@leberhilfe.org

Annie Simond, Director, Global Public Affairs, Virology, Bristol-Myers Squibb
Tel: 00 33 6 08 95 67 62 Email: annie.simond@bms.com

References

1. World Health Organization. Hepatitis B Fact Sheet. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs204/en/index.html> Accessed on 1 July 2011
2. Global Report. Chapter introduction. Available at http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/Global_report.htm Accessed on 11 October 2011