



HFI's Wellness Approach Included in CDC's 2008 Top Five Evidence-Based Prevention Interventions.

A "Study to Reduce Intravenous Exposure" (STRIVE) was among the top five Evidence-Based HIV Prevention Interventions identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2008. Through a series of efficacy reviews, STRIVE represented the strongest behavioral intervention in the literature to date demonstrating efficacy in reducing HIV/HCV incidence and related risk behaviors.

The STRIVE interventions aimed to reduce hepatitis C (HCV) transmission risk by training participants to mentor other injection drug users (IDUs) and to promote risk reduction information. The program increased knowledge about HCV and provided skills to reduce injection behaviors and alcohol use. A video, "The Silent Stalker," which was used in the study focuses on providing basic information on the life supporting importance of the liver to encourage individual's responsibility for personal health management. Developed by Thelma King Thiel, one of the co-authors of the study, the video provides non threatening, memorable communication techniques to enhance sharing of information with other IDUs. Additional approaches demonstrating how viruses are transmitted through sharing needles, cotton swabs and other paraphernalia used by IDUs were incorporated in the study.

Thiel, Chair and CEO of the Hepatitis Foundation International, is internationally recognized as *The Liver Lady* for her unique use of humor and analogies to motivate individuals to understand why and how to protect the liver, their internal power source, and the target for hepatitis viruses.

Recently invited by the World Health Organization to meet with representative from 12 countries addressing health issues surrounding viral hepatitis, Ms Thiel provided each attendee with easily replicated prevention messages, educational materials and a video promoting primary and secondary prevention.

"Unfortunately, the liver is a non complaining organ," Thiel lamented, "Millions of people around the world are HCV infected, transmitting this insidious disease to others and totally unaware of their own infection. Information provided in HFI's training enables individuals to make informed decision about lifestyle behavior choices."

The Hepatitis Foundation International, and internationally recognized leader in preventive education, is located in Silver Spring, Maryland. For additional information:

www.hepatitisfoundation.org, 1-800-891-0707