Invitation to participate in the 3rd EU HCV Policy Virtual Summit on the elimination of Hepatitis C in Europe Securing Wider EU Commitment to the elimination of HCV 24 March 2021 2pm – 6pm

Dear Mr Nielsen

On behalf of the Hepatitis B and C Public Policy Association we have the pleasure to **invite you to participate in the Association's upcoming European Policy Summit** dedicated to the elimination of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) in Europe entitled *Securing Wider EU Commitment to the Elimination of HCV.* **As a champion of the healthcare sector and given your commitment to shaping the policy agenda to improve patients' lives, we would be delighted if you could join**. The Summit, which is organised in partnership with leading patient and professional associations, will be held virtually on the **24th March 2021, between 2pm and 6pm**.

Despite the progress that has been made in recent years, HCV remains a major public health problem in Europe. In the European Union (EU) more people die each year from HCV than from HIV/AIDS. The latest data for the WHO European Region shows an estimated 15 million people have hepatitis C, which equates to 2.0% of all adults. When the elimination strategy was published in May 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that more than 7 million lives would be saved worldwide by 2030, if targets were achieved. However, according to recent European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) findings, only a few European countries have met the 2020 target of the European Action Plan in diagnosing 50% of people with chronic hepatitis B or C.

In the context of strained healthcare systems and shifting priorities, largely as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential to ensure that the importance of efforts to

eliminate HCV is not forgotten. If anything, the current pandemic should underline the need for widespread and effective public health responses. Often referred to as a "silent pandemic" as patients often have no symptoms during the first 20-30 years, HCV must continue to be a priority for decision makers.

This planned half-day Summit aims to bring together policymakers, experts, members of parliament, mayors, patient associations, and clinicians from across Europe, to raise awareness on the state of play regarding the goal of elimination of HCV by 2030. It will also showcase best practices as well as indicate what policy actions are needed to get more countries on track to achieve HCV elimination by 2030.

The 2021 EU HCV Policy Summit will provide an exceptional opportunity for participants to:

- Review the progress made in the last five years to understand how far Europe is from achieving the goal of eliminating HCV by 2030
- Exchange views on the role and state of diagnosis, treatment and care
- Evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the HCV epidemic
- Share national-level best practice and discuss EU's position as a leader in helping deliver the elimination target

You can find more information about the Summit on the conference website www.hcvbrusselssummit.eu

We very much hope that you will be able to spare some time from your busy agenda to accept our invitation. You can register your interest in the Summit through the event's Eventbrite page. Once you have registered, details on how to access the Summit's online platform will be sent closer to the date of the event.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Ms Ann Fox at the Summit Secretariat

(afox@hepbcppa.org) should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

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