



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sen. Rodríguez helps organize Hepatitis C awareness campaign; first meeting tomorrow

EL PASO – State Sen. José Rodríguez is working with a local coalition advocating that baby boomers, people born from 1945 through 1965, get tested for the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). The coalition, which includes the health care educational platform Mano y Corazón – formed by the Senator’s Health Care Advisory Committee – will host its inaugural session for physicians, nurses, psychotherapists, and social workers from 7 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 17 at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (AEC Auditorium, 4800 Alberta Ave.). The session is free and offers advanced education credits for multiple disciplines.

“People in this age group are five times more likely to have HCV. If baby boomers respond to this call to action, they’ll have a better chance of preventing full-blown liver disease. Unfortunately, half of the people affected by HCV don’t even know they have the virus. Screening is an essential part of this campaign,” emphasized Sen. Rodríguez.

Physicians do not usually order lab work for HCV because patients generally do not display symptoms of hepatitis until the disease is in advanced stages. The virus remains undetected, which increases the chance of full-blown liver disease. Although there are new medications available, early detection remains crucial for mitigating the health and financial impacts on individuals and families, as well as El Paso’s public health care system.

As part of his commitment to this issue, Sen. Rodríguez served as legislative sponsor for the 2015 Texas Viral Hepatitis Summit, which was held on August 26, 2015 at the Texas Capitol. The summit provided a forum for viral hepatitis stakeholders from across Texas to strategize on statewide efforts.

In El Paso, Sen. Rodríguez’s Health Care Advisory Committee and numerous other organizations are supporting the efforts of the El Paso Public Health Department to develop and implement a local awareness and detection management campaign titled, “Assessing and Treating Baby Boomers for Hepatitis C.”

What: Assessing and Treating Baby Boomers for Hepatitis C

When: 7 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Oct.17, 2015

Where: AEC Auditorium, TTUHSC, 4800 Alberta Ave., El Paso, TX 79905

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José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Education; Health and Human Services; Veteran Affairs and Military Installations; Nominations; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs.