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New Hepatitis B service launched today for the Chinese community

'56 Dean Street', Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Foundation Trust's new state-of-the-art NHS sexual health clinic based in Soho, London, has teamed up with the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre (CNHLC) to launch a weekly 'Hepatitis B (HBV) diagnosis and vaccination' service for the Chinese community.

Eddie Chan, Director of the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre, explained: "Each year, about 500,000 to 700,000 people worldwide die of diseases connected to HBV and it is highly prevalent in Chinese communities in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia.

"We recently conducted a small study which showed that the Chinese community in London has one of the highest rates of HBV in the United Kingdom.

"11% of those tested showed evidence of infection with the virus which is three times higher than homosexual men attending GUM (genito-urinary medicine) clinics in the UK (who are the highest at risk group in the UK).

"In an effort to address this we are very pleased to be collaborating with 56 Dean Street to develop an holistic strategy to diagnose, treat and vaccinate members of the Chinese community infected with chronic HBV in London."

There are more than 100,000 people of Chinese origin living and working in London with catering being the most popular occupation amongst the Chinese population. However, the long working hours in the catering industry combined with language and cultural issues means that the Chinese community makes the lowest use of NHS services of all minority ethnic groups in the UK.

Dr Macky Natha, a consultant physician at 56 Dean Street, adds: "We are delighted to be working with the CNHLC to improve access and encourage our local Chinese community to make better use of our services. These are provided in strict confidence and are designed to help people improve the health of themselves and their families and partners.

"This service will allow us to more accurately estimate rates of Hepatitis B in the Chinese community which should also allow us to design and plan future services for this group.

"The Department of Health has also recommended that non-UK born Chinese in the UK should be targeted for screening and vaccination to reduce undiagnosed HBV infection and transmission which our new service will also address."

This service has been warmly received both by the leaders of the Chinese community and NHS Westminster.