



March 8, 2002

Mr. Bill Remak
Conference Committee Chairperson
149 Wyndham Way, Suite 223
Petaluma, CA 94954

Dear Mr. Remak:

On behalf of the Office of the Surgeon General, I congratulate you on convening the "First California Inter-County Statewide HCV Task Force Conference," and extend my welcome to its attendees.

The focus of this conference -- to develop and encourage resource partners with a commitment to prevention, education, screening, patient support, outreach, public awareness, treatment, and advocacy -- is critical to developing and advancing an effective, integrated strategy which will make a difference for this disease. Hepatitis C is a growing and serious public health problem, with potentially devastating consequences, including cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death.

I applaud your efforts to develop a truly coordinated community effort in both prevention, as well as response. You have brought together representatives from more than half of California's counties which include more than 70% of the state's population. In addition, you have delegates from professional associations, legislatures, academia, health care providers and facilities, foundations, corrections, school boards, pharmaceuticals, police and firefighters, and other interested parties. This is a remarkable effort, with remarkable people making a commitment to make a difference.

Congratulations to the conference organizers as well as to the participants. I extend my best wishes for a successful and enriching conference, and look forward to learning more about your progress in addressing this disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Kenneth P. Moritsugu". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kenneth P. Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H.
RADM, USPHS
Acting Surgeon General