Boston ranked No. 1 in energy efficiency second year in row

BY THE CITY OF BOSTON

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. (Image courtesy of the City of Boston.)

For the second year in a row, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) named Boston the most energy-efficient city in the United States, according to its 2015 City Energy Efficiency Scorecard.

“It is an honor Boston has been recognized as America’s most energy-efficient city,” said Mayor Marty Walsh. “Our goal is to help Boston residents and businesses save energy and money, and through collaborative efforts with our utility partners, Eversource and National Grid, we are creating a thriving, healthy and innovative Boston. I look forward to continuing these efforts for both our environment and residents.”

The biennial report ranks large U.S. cities on policies and other actions to save energy. ACEEE included 51 cities in this edition of the Scorecard, up 17 from the 2013 edition of the report.

“Our findings show that cities continue to be laboratories of innovation when it comes to energy efficiency, with many cities finding the envelope for more energy savings in the last few years,” said ACEEE research analyst David Ribeiro, lead report author. “Cities are also improving their approaches when it comes to tracking and communicating their efforts to save energy.”

“Clean energy is a vibrant part of the Massachusetts economy — employing close to 100,000 people — and this accomplishment further bolsters Massachusetts and the City of Boston’s credentials as a leading global hub of clean energy,” said Massachusetts Clean Energy Center CEO Alicia Barton. Cities were evaluated on what actions they are taking to reduce energy use in five key areas: government operations, community initiatives, buildings, utilities and transportation.

ACEEE cites four areas that helped the City of Boston take top honors in the report — community-wide initiative, building policies, energy and water utility policies, and transportation.

Highlights include:

• The progress the City has made towards its Climate Action Plan goals, which has been supported by the Mayor’s Green Wave Boston initiative and by the business and institutional leaders on the Boston Green Ribbon Commission;

• The dedicated outreach and effective partnerships the City has formed with community groups and utility companies to bring energy savings to residents and small businesses through its Renew Boston program;

• The City’s ability to expand and invest in self-financed building improvements through energy performance contracting, the Renew Boston Trust initiative which Mayor Walsh announced in December 2014; and

• The implementation of the City’s Building Energy Reporting and Disclosure Ordinance, which requires all large buildings to rate and report their energy use to improve energy management, starting in 2013.

Joining Boston in the top five rankings were New York City, Washington D.C., San Francisco and Seattle.

To read the report and its key findings and recommendations, and to view the interactive infographic, visit: http://aceee.org/local-policy/city-scorecard.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Decoding simple Icelandic

By Ling-Mei Wong

Boston Public Schools (BPS) superintendent Tommy Chang met members of Boston’s Asian American community at a reception on July 22 at the China Pearl in Boston.

Chang became superintendent on July 1. He was previously the local instructor superintendents of the Intensive Support & Innovation Center (ISIC) at the Los Angeles Unified School District, where he oversaw 135 schools and approximately 95,000 students.

Chang spoke about his vision to engage and mobilize families within the Boston school community. He committed to working on eight projects in his first 100 days before the first day of school Sept. 8, which include advanced work classes, greater equity, innovation in the classroom, high quality schools and empowering those closest to students. More information on his 100-Day Plan, formed from 40 community conversations generating 1,300 data points, is online at www.bostonpublicschools.org.

“Boston has great schools that parents are fighting for their children to get in,” Chang said. “But not all the schools across Boston are high-quality ones.”

Community representative

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中文第十版
When your family comes to visit from abroad, make sure they’re covered.

Visiting Family Medical Coverage lets you purchase short-term coverage for family and friends visiting from abroad. We’re the first health plan in New England to partner with International Medical Group® to bring you access to a broad network of health care providers with quality coverage that meets your family’s needs. Choose from two different levels of coverage and add it for as long as you need—from a few days up to two years. We’re proud to bring you this one-of-a-kind option.

To learn more, visit harvardpilgrim.org/visitingfamily or call 617-509-8015.
Event Calendar

Right to Remain block party
Saturday, July 25 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Johnny Court and Maple Place
Boston, MA 02111
Residents and community members will celebrate summer with a community-building block party, including games, community information, refreshments, performances and a watermelon-eating contest.

Free monthly legal clinic
Monday, July 27 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
1509 Hancock Street, Suite 209
Quincy, MA 02169
Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. will host a free monthly legal clinic addressing individual concerns over immigration law, landlord/tenant law, family law, personal injury and criminal issues. For more information, please visit www.quincyasianresources.org or call (617) 472-2200.

Naturalization workshop
Monday, July 27 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Asian American Civic Association naturalization workshop provides free information on filing naturalization applications, translated study material and much more. Please register with Melody Tsang at (617) 426-9492 or o melody@aacas.org.

Free taichi classes
Tuesday, July 28 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Symphony Park, Edgerly Road and Norwood Way
Boston, MA 02115
The Friends of Symphony Park will hold taichi classes with Sifu Huan Zang at Symphony Park in the Fenway.

A Taste of Ethnic Boston
Tuesday, July 28 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
185 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
Get Connected! in partnership with the Rose Kennedy Greenway is hosting the second annual A Taste of Ethnic Boston at the Harboride Inn. Tickets $15 per person online: http://getconnected-wd.com/events/a-taste-of-ethnic-boston.

Free yoga classes
Thursday, July 30 6 to 7:15 p.m.
Boston Common Frog Pond
38 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
Yoga instructors will provide flow movements for people of all levels.

22nd OCD Conference
July 31 to August 2
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
425 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210
This unique event allows people with OCD and their loved ones to learn about the latest OCD treatment and information alongside the mental health professionals who care for them. The Conference features more than 100 presentations, workshops, and seminars as well as nearly two dozen support groups and various evening events. Visit ocd2015.org to preview the Conference program and register. Registration fee varies based on type of attendee and what portions of the conference you plan to attend.

Boston Creates
community conversation
Saturday, August 1 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
38 Ash Street
Boston, MA 02111
A Boston Creates community conversation will take place at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center to develop an arts and cultural plan for Boston. For more information, visit www.bostoncreates.org.

Cosplay Celebration
Saturday, August 1 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
191 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
Join together lovers of anime/manga and video games with live dance performance, this all-ages event encourages everyone to dress up in their finest cosplay outfits. Tickets are $15 for adults and $10 for kids. For more information and online ticket sales, please visit us at www.CosplayCelebration.com.

Boston Seafood Festival
Sunday, August 2 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
212 Northern Avenue
Boston, MA 02210
Enjoy the freshest, most delicious local seafood from New England’s favorite dining destinations and the Boston Fish Pier. Tickets from $15 and up on sale at the website, BostonSeafoodFestival.org.

Chinatown Resident Association meeting
Wednesday, August 5 6:30 p.m.
85 Kingston Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Chinatown Resident Association meeting will take place at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School cafeteria. The public is welcome to attend.

Parcel 12 community workshop
Saturday, August 8 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
38 Oak Street
Boston, MA 02210
Learn how together we can build new affordable housing for the Chinatown community. Asian Community Development Corporation’s workshop series is to create a community vision for Parcel 12. Workshops conduct in English and Chinese at the Metropolitan Community Room. Free breakfast, lunch and child care. For more information, contact May Lui at may.lui@asiancdc.org or (617) 852-2380 x 212.

Fab Festival
August 8 to 9
Reggie Lewis Athletic Center
1350 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02120
The local celebration of making via digital fabrication, creativity and community is organized by the MIT Center for Bits and Atoms and the Fab Foundation. For more information, visit www.fab11.org/fab-festival.

Chinatown August Moon Festival
Tuesday, August 8 11 a.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Clean Up Chinatown Committee will host the August Moon Festival featuring vendors, games, activities for children and cultural performances.

Clean Up Chinatown Committee meeting
Tuesday, August 11 8 a.m.
87 Tyler Street
Boston, MA 02111
The Clean Up Chinatown Committee will host the August Moon Festival featuring vendors, games, activities for children and cultural performances.

Quincy August Moon Festival
Sunday, August 16 11 a.m.
Quincy Center
Quincy Asian Resources Inc. is hosting the Quincy August Moon Festival, a community event filled with vendors, food trucks, games, activities for children and performances throughout the day. For more information, visit http://quincyasianresources.org/.

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Clothing retailer Primark holds hiring event in Chinatown

BY NATALIE ORNELL

Waiting in line for an interview with clothing retailer Primark, Asma Mahfoud, 25, explained that she once hand tailored wedding dresses in Morocco.

The advanced level English student was one of nearly 40 people who participated in a job screening at the Asian American Civic Association (AACA) July 17 with clothing retailer Primark. Mahfoud said she was excited about a job at Primark because of her fashion background. “If I got the job, it would help me a lot in my life. I want to go to college,” she said.

The Irish clothing chain is opening its U.S. flagship location at Downtown Crossing on Sept. 10. Primark is hiring around 1,000 people.

Cynthia Chapin, AACA’s director of employment services, said it typically hosts five job events where an employer can meet with candidates per year.

Clothing retailer Primark held a hiring event at the Asian American Civic Association July 17. (Image courtesy of Natalie Ornell.)

Chinatown meeting roundup: Clean Up Chinatown, CNC

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Clean Up Chinatown Committee met on July 14. The Chinatown South Cove Neighborhood Council (CNC) met on July 20.

Clean Up Chinatown

The Clean Up Chinatown Committee met at the Asian American Civic Association.

Representatives from the Chinatown Business Association (CBA) have joined the council and actively want to clean up the community.

“The CBA sees the importance of Chinatown becoming a friendlier and cleaner place to increase business,” said Mary Chin, committee moderator.

The committee will approach cigarette butt recycling company TerraCycle about bringing its services to Chinatown.

Boston’s city government will work with the committee to put up street signs on littering and trash disposal, which will include penalties and fine information.

The committee will have a street team working on community education with flyers and meetings throughout August.

The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. For more information, email Tong Gao at tonggao@aaca-boston.org.

CNC

The CNC met at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.

A presentation about two possible billboards at the Veolia Energy building. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

A presentation on billboards on the Veolia Energy building. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

A public forum on art and culture took place at the Metropolitan. Janette Chan, executive director of the Asian Community Development Corporation, wrote her input on art and cultural planning. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

A Boston Creates community conversation took place July 16 at the Metropolitan. Janette Chan, executive director of the Asian Community Development Corporation, wrote her input on art and cultural planning. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

A public forum on art and culture took place at the Metropolitan on July 16, as part of the citywide Boston Creates art planning initiative.

Boston Creates will hold community conversation at all 16 neighborhoods of Boston, with the first Chinatown conversation held on July 16.

Community members split into two groups by language: English and Cantonese.

Among the Cantonese speakers were Henry Yee, chairman of the Chinatown Residents Association and his wife May Yee. "I have been in Boston 49 years and I am proud of my Chinese heritage," Yee said. He hoped all public events in Chinatown would be translated into Chinese.

For more information, visit www.BostonCreates.org.

Affordable One-Bedroom Condo in Arlington

This home is steps from the Minuteman Bikeway and just a short walk from Arlington Center and the 67 and 77 bus lines to Alewife and Harvard stations. The unit is deed-restricted to ensure permanent affordability.

- Priced at $163,093
- Income and Asset Limits Apply
  - 1-Person HIE: $48,800
  - 2-Person HIE: $55,800
  - 3-Person HIE: $62,750

Interested buyers must submit an application by July 31, 2015 to be included in the lottery.

Visit Metrowest CD’s website for additional information about the opportunity.

http://www.metrowestcd.org/housing-services/a


Mystic Valley Elder Services

We’re Hiring!

Bilingual Case Managers

Cantonese/English
Mandarin/English

To view all open positions:
www.mves.org/join-us

Affordable Homeownership

Framingham, MA

Montage at Danforth Green

Five 2-Bedroom Units - $173,500
One 3-Bedroom Unit - $193,100

Information Session: Wednesday, 7/8/15, 7 pm
Memorial Building - 150 Concord St, Framingham

Applications accepted through 8/18/15, 1 pm
Lottery: Thurs. 9/17/15 at 7 pm

Application and Lottery Information:
Housing@Sudbury.MA.US
278 Old Sudbury Road, Sudbury, MA 01776, 978-439-3373

Income Limit 80% Boston AMI and Asset Limits
Use and Resale Restrictions Apply

The Chinatown South Cove Neighborhood Council meeting took place July 20 at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, Mariotts Snowman, president of Boardstructure, gave a presentation on billboards on the Veolia Energy building. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

The Irish clothing chain is opening its U.S. flagship location at Downtown Crossing on Sept. 10. Primark is hiring around 1,000 people.

Another presentation on a digital sign at the W Hotel, 100 Stuart Street, was given by David Newman and Susan Tracy of The Strategy Group for Orange Barrel Media. Orange Barrel Media maintains the digital signs at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and in Fenway at Ipswich Street. The proposed sign was supported by the council two years ago and passed the Zoning Board of Appeal process. However, the state Outdoor Advertising Board found the sign was within 100 feet of a digital sign in Chinatown that was approved — but not yet built — requiring an overhaul of the proposal. No vote was taken on the digital sign.

Wilson Lee, owner of the closed Dynasty restaurant on 33 Edinboro Street, said he planned to reopen the restaurant and will return to the council with detailed plans of its interior, exterior and operation.

The council voted to make its co-moderators also moderators of the Chinatown Safety Committee, which is a standing committee of the CNC. The CNC’s moderators are Sherry Dong, Felix Lui and Ruth Moy.

The CNC meets the third Monday of the month at 6 p.m. For more information on the CNC or to be included in an upcoming agenda, email BostonCSCNC@gmail.com.
Chinatown crime blotter for July 11 to 24

BY THE BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

All reports are submitted by the Boston Police Department. The time period is from July 11 to 24 for District A-1, which includes Chinatown.

To report a crime or suspicious activity, call 911. Interpreters are available for Chinese speakers.

Aggravated battery
July 12, 6:23 p.m.: The officer responded to 631 Washington Street on a report of a person with a knife. Upon arrival, the officers met with the victim. She stated she was assaulted by the suspect.

Aggravated assault
July 12, 11:09 p.m.: The officer responded to Harrison Avenue on a report of an assault victim. Upon arrival, the officer met and spoke with the victim. He stated he was walking through the club and outdoors grilling area. This luxury community is located close to Tidewater at Salisbury is a 210 unit rental apartment community. 26 of these apartments will be made available through this application process. Utilities not included. Tenants will pay own Gas Heat, Gas Hot Water, Electricity (including cooking), Water and Sewer

Tidewater at Salisbury is a 210 unit rental apartment community. 26 of these apartments will be made available through this application process. Utilities not included. Tenants will pay own Gas Heat, Gas Hot Water, Electricity (including cooking), Water and Sewer

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Return to reasonable lending opens door to homeownership

By Dave Liniger, CEO, Chairman and Co-Founder of RE/MAX

Home-buying season is heating up. Homes sold faster in April than at any point in almost the last two years, according to data released by the National Association of Realtors (NAR). Existing-home sales are on pace to top 5 million this year.

Consumers are rising into the housing market thanks in part to the Federal Housing Administration’s decision to reduce mortgage insurance premiums by 0.5 percent earlier this year. The move could save 2 million homeowners an average of $900 a year and allow a quarter of a million Americans to buy their first home.

Affordable financing doesn’t just help homebuyers. An increase in the number of potential buyers boosts prices for sellers. And it encourages builders to expand the supply of housing, which benefits the entire economy.

Lenders and regulators must commit to maintaining reasonable mortgage lending standards like these, which lay the foundation for sustained economic prosperity. In recent years, many potential homebuyers have faced excessively strict lending standards because lenders failed to verify the information behind that picture. A return to the traditional practice of documentation and verification has led to the highest rate of underwritten loans and the lowest default rate in over a decade.

FHA has coupled its lending reforms with a $21 billion improvement in its single-family insurance fund, which compensates lenders in the event of default. Last year, for the first time since 2006, the agency’s capital reserves increased year-over-year and had a positive balance.

Other players in the mortgage market are following suit. Mortgage guarantee entities Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have reduced down-payment requirements for first-time homebuyers. Under the new terms, buyers will only need to put down 3 percent of the home’s cost, rather than the previous minimum of 5 percent.

Down payments alone are poor predictors of default. FHA has successfully insured loans with 3.5 percent down for decades. Like FHA, Fannie and Freddie have retained guidelines ensuring that potential borrowers have strong credit scores and full documentation.

This is good for the economy. Every home sale generates $60,000 in additional economic activity. By committing to lower mortgage insurance costs and reasonable lending requirements, top housing officials can signal that they’re serious about making homeownership a reality for millions.

That’s good for the economy. Every home sale generates $60,000 in additional economic activity.

Section 8 subsidized housing for elderly and handicapped. 1 & 2 bedroom apartments, some wheelchair adapted. All apartments have fully appliance kitchens, wall-to-wall carpets, A/C, tiled baths, recessed patios and more. Modern 12 story building located on bus line, steps away from Central Public Library. Apartments available on an open occupancy basis. Waiting list maintained. Call for an application and eligibility requirements weekday mornings.

Equal Housing Opportunity
Handicapped Accessible
Smoke Free

Axis at Lakeshore Phase 2
Bridgewater, MA

1BRs @ $1,153*, 2BRs @ $1,382*, 3BRs @ $1,589*
No Utilities included except water and sewer
*Income guidelines may apply. Please inquire in advance for reasonable accommodations.

To apply for one of the 48 affordable units in Phase 1 that are currently available, please call the Leasing Office now at (508-279-2947). You do not have to go through this lottery process for a unit that is part of Phase 1.

The 80% AMI Income Limits are as follows: $46,100* (1 person), $52,650* (2 people), $59,200* (3 people), $65,800* (4 people), $71,100* (5 people), $76,300* (6 people)

*A income limits subject to change with the HUD’s release of the 2016 Area Medium Income.

A Public Information Session will be held at 6 pm on August 4th in the Little Meeting Room at Bridgewater Public Library (15 South St.).

Completed Applications may be mailed, faxed, emailed, or delivered in person. Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received by 2:00 PM on Sept 14th, 2015. The Lottery will be held on September 30th, 2015 at 6 PM in same location as the info session above.

For Applications and Details on the Lottery or for reasonable accommodations, please call 617.782.6900 or go to www.s-e-b.com/lottery. For TTY services dial 711. Free translation available.

Applications and Info Packets also available in the Bridgewater Public Library (15 South St.).

Hours: M-W 9-8, Th 10-5, F-Sa 10-2

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Framingham Green Apartments
136 Maynard Road
Framingham, MA
508-872-0500
PeabodyProperties.com

- Studios & 1BR*
- Heat & hot water included
- Fully applianced kitchen
- Grand community gathering space
- Scenic, landscaped setting with gazebo
- Laundry care center
- On-site parking
- Pet-friendly (guidelines apply)
- Professional on-site management
- 24-hour emergency maintenance
- Close to shopping, medical centers, bus service via the MetroWest transit and, major highways

Framingham Green is designed for seniors age 62+ as well as persons with disabilities who are under age 62.

*Income guidelines may apply. Please inquire in advance for reasonable accommodations. Information contained herein subject to change without notice.
Asthma and immunotherapy: Potentially life-changing therapy

BY DR. JOHN LEUNG, ALICE SHEN AND KOEN BEUKEMA, TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

Many people think medication is the only way to treat asthma. However, there are numerous other options such as allergen avoidance and immunotherapy.

What is immunotherapy?
When an allergen enters the body of a non-allergic person, the immune system does not perceive it as a threat and does not react. In an individual with allergic asthma, however, the allergen is labeled as a foreign invader, causing the immune system to produce a variety of responses, such as coughing or swelling of the airways. This abnormal reaction is the cause of symptoms in allergic asthma.

Immunotherapy targets this abnormal reaction by repeatedly exposing the individual to an allergen until the immune response is suppressed, and the body no longer fights the allergen.

What are the benefits from immunotherapy?
Immunotherapy can reduce the severity of symptoms and reduces the need for medication, providing relief for several years.

Who benefits from immunotherapy?
People with allergic asthma of all ages may benefit from immunotherapy. To consider immunotherapy in a patient with asthma, there must be a clear relationship between a specific allergen and the symptoms. The following are the most common allergens for which immunotherapy are given: different types of pollen, animal dander (cat and dog) and dust mites.

How do I know if I am at risk for hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is extremely common. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) states “every year, 3-4 million people” are infected with hepatitis C. About 150 million people are chronically infected and at risk of developing liver cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and even liver cancer.

What is hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a virus that can cause inflammation of the liver. Your liver is an important part of your health. It is responsible for detoxifying (cleaning) the blood of harmful substances, aiding in digestion and making proteins. When these functions cannot be carried out properly, this puts you at risk for many complications.

Hepatitis C is a virus that is transmitted through blood and can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and even liver cancer. Many people do not even know they have hepatitis C, as there are often no symptoms until the disease is very advanced. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine currently available to prevent hepatitis C.

Getting started
Screening for hepatitis C can be done through a simple blood test. If your results show presence of infection, your provider will verify your genotype. A genotype is essential. Determining your genotype is important so that your provider can choose the best medication or combination that is right for you. Once you know your genotype, you do not have to be tested again, as it stays the same throughout treatment.

There are six genotypes (1-6) that have been indentified for the hepatitis C virus. Each genotype has a different medication regimen and length of treatment.

What's new: Things you should know about Hepatitis C medication

BY KATHLEEN COLEMAN, TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

What is hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a virus that can cause inflammation of the liver. Your liver is an important part of your health. It is responsible for detoxifying (cleaning) the blood of harmful substances, aiding in digestion and making proteins. When these functions cannot be carried out properly, this puts you at risk for many complications.

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More than 350,000 people die from hepatitis C-related liver diseases every year,” found the WHO in 2015. You may be at increased risk if you are were born between 1945-1965, work in health care, have ever had medical procedures such as surgery, dental work or outpatient procedures such as colonoscopy outside the United States, have ever used IV drugs or snorted cocaine, have ever received a blood transfusion, have HIV, have a tattoo or were born to a mother who was infected with hepatitis C.

Remember, hepatitis C is only spread through contact with contaminated blood. You cannot get it from hugging, kissing, coughing, sharing utensils or from close personal contact.

Hepatitis C is curable! After discussing with your provider which treatment is appropriate for you, the next step is getting you started.

For more information about screening and treatment, you may contact the Gastroenterology division at Tufts (617-636-7010) or your doctor.

Great news
Hepatitis C is curable! After discussing with your provider which treatment is appropriate for you, the next step is getting you started.

Getting started
Screening for hepatitis C can be done through a simple blood test. If your results show presence of infection, your provider will verify your genotype. A genotype is essential. Determining your genotype is important so that your provider can choose the best medication or combination that is right for you. Once you know your genotype, you do not have to be tested again, as it stays the same throughout treatment.

There are six genotypes (1-6) that have been indentified for the hepatitis C virus. Each genotype has a different medication regimen and length of treatment.

What's new: Things you should know about Hepatitis C medication

BY KATHLEEN COLEMAN, TUFTS MEDICAL CENTER

What is hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a virus that can cause inflammation of the liver. Your liver is an important part of your health. It is responsible for detoxifying (cleaning) the blood of harmful substances, aiding in digestion and making proteins. When these functions cannot be carried out properly, this puts you at risk for many complications.

Hepatitis C is a virus that is transmitted through blood and can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and even liver cancer. Many people do not even know they have hepatitis C, as there are often no symptoms until the disease is very advanced. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine currently available to prevent hepatitis C.

How do I know if I am at risk for hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is extremely common. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) states “every year, 3-4 million people” are infected with hepatitis C. About 150 million people are chronically infected and at risk of developing liver cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and even liver cancer.

More than 350,000 people die from hepatitis C-related liver diseases every year,” found the WHO in 2015. You may be at increased risk if you are were born between 1945-1965, work in health care, have ever had medical procedures such as surgery, dental work or outpatient procedures such as colonoscopy outside the United States, have ever used IV drugs or snorted cocaine, have ever received a blood transfusion, have HIV, have a tattoo or were born to a mother who was infected with hepatitis C.

Remember, hepatitis C is only spread through contact with contaminated blood. You cannot get it from hugging, kissing, coughing, sharing utensils or from close personal contact.

Getting started
Screening for hepatitis C can be done through a simple blood test. If your results show presence of infection, your provider will verify your genotype. A genotype is essential. Determining your genotype is important so that your provider can choose the best medication or combination that is right for you. Once you know your genotype, you do not have to be tested again, as it stays the same throughout treatment.

There are six genotypes (1-6) that have been indentified for the hepatitis C virus. Each genotype has a different medication regimen and length of treatment.

Great news
Hepatitis C is curable! After discussing with your provider which treatment is appropriate for you, the next step is getting you started.

For more information about screening and treatment, you may contact the Gastroenterology division at Tufts (617-636-7010) or your doctor.

About the author
Kathleen Coleman is a nurse practitioner in gastroenterology and hepatology at Tufts Medical Center.
HEALTH

Get tested on July 28, World Hepatitis Day

BY GILEAD SCIENCES

On July 28, political leaders, medical experts and community advocates in Boston and across the United States will join forces to mark World Hepatitis Day and to raise awareness of a disease that affects as many as 2 million Americans — chronic hepatitis B (CHB). While anyone can contract hepatitis B, people of Asian descent are disproportionately affected, representing nearly three-quarters of individuals affected worldwide. Here in the United States, it is estimated that 1 million Asian Americans have CHB — that’s half of all cases in the country.

Did you know?

- Chronic hepatitis B is the world’s most common liver infection, with about 240 million people affected.
- Asian Americans are at high risk for the disease.
- Most Asian Americans contracted hepatitis B from their mothers during birth or early childhood.
- Chronic hepatitis B is treatable, but many people do not know they have the disease.
- Individuals at higher risk should get tested for hepatitis B.

But what exactly is hepatitis B, and why is it such a threat to our community?

CHB is caused by a virus that is found in blood and other bodily fluids. The disease can be prevented. CHB can also be managed — but if left untreated, the condition can be fatal.

First-generation Asian Americans are particularly high risk for hepatitis B due to historically low rates of infant vaccination against the disease in these countries. In fact, most Asian Americans who have hepatitis B contracted it during childbirth from their mothers. That’s why tragically, in our community, it is common to see multiple members of the same family affected by hepatitis B.

Despite its high incidence rate in Asian communities, as many as two in three Asian Americans who have chronic hepatitis B do not know they are infected. That is because hepatitis B does not always cause noticeable symptoms. CHB can slowly destroy the liver over time, increasing the risk of serious liver disease. In fact, because of hepatitis B, Asian Americans are almost three times more likely to develop liver cancer than Caucasians.

The good news is that hepatitis B can be treated with reliable, inexpensive and, minimally invasive screening tests. Testing is being offered for free at community events in Boston and across the country in recognition of World Hepatitis Day, and everyone should get tested — particularly if you are a first-generation Asian American.

There is a safe and effective vaccine that can protect you from infection, and it is widely available in the United States. If you test positive for hepatitis B, talk to your doctor about whether treatment would be appropriate for you. Regular screenings to monitor the health of your liver are very important, and there are treatments that can help protect your liver from future damage — some are just one pill, once a day.

So get tested for hepatitis B on July 28, World Hepatitis Day. We have the tools to address this epidemic in our community, but it all starts with getting a simple blood test to know your status.

Get tested for hepatitis B, and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

For information about chronic hepatitis B or to find a testing center near you, go to hepatitis.org or call 1-800-622-6710

Asian Americans face increased hepatitis risk

BY LING-MEI WONG

“For Smart Now,” a hepatitis awareness event hosted by biotechnology company Gilead, took place July 16 at Revere Hotel. The event brought awareness to World Hepatitis Day on July 28 and included a panel with two doctors, a nurse practitioner, two students and a community health representative spoke about hepatitis in the Asian American community.

According to Dr. Rong Gong, medical director at South Cove Community Health Center, many infected patients show no symptoms of hepatitis. “Eight percent of our Asian patients have hepatitis, so it is part of our screening,” he said.

The screening blood test costs $20 and the hepatitis B vaccine costs $25, said Chhan Touch, a Cambodian nurse practitioner based in Lowell.

Leslie Hsu Oh, founder of the Hepatitis B Initiative, spoke about her family’s experiences with hepatitis B. She launched the Hepatitis B Initiative when she was at Harvard in 1997.

Mascuppic Village Dracut, MA

4 Beautifully designed attached condominiums

55+ households to be sold by lottery

Sale Price $169,200 with 1543 sq. ft.
2 1/2 Baths 2 Car Garage

Eligibility Criteria

1. At least one household buyer is 55 years old.
2. Asset/equity limit up to $275,000
3. Gross Household Income Limits:
   - 1 person: $46,100
   - 2 persons: $52,650
   - 3 persons: $59,250
   - 4 persons: $65,800

Deed Restricted/Income and Asset Eligibility

Public Information Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Monday, August 3, 2015 at Dracut Town Hall, 62 Arlington Street — Selectmen’s Chambers Application Deadline:

September 3, 2015

Open House

Sunday, August 23, 2015
12:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m.
780 Nashua Road, Unit 12

Directions: From Route 3, take Exit 2 in New Hampshire. Turn right off exit. At third set of lights bear Left on Dracut Road which becomes Nashua Road. Drive 3 miles and Mascuppic Village is on the right OR from Lowell MA take Mammoth Rd to Nashua Rd

For program information:
Maureen O’Hagan
Call: (978) 456-8388
Email: lotteryinfo@mcohousingservices.com
Pick Up: Dracut Town Hall, Town Clerk Office, Public Library and Senior Center or on Web: www.mcohousingservices.com
Get wise about buying or leasing a vehicle

BY STATEPOINT

For many people, buying or leasing a car is their first “big ticket” item. Having a plan for how this new vehicle will fit into your budget can help you be confident about your decision and keep your finances in check. “Planning for large purchases can seem daunting, but having the right information about your finances can make it easier to meet your goal,” said Mike Kane, vice president of Consumer Credit Operations at Ally Financial. “Get prepared so you can walk into the dealership with confidence.”

To make a smart decision, Kane is offering some tips to help you.

**Do your research**
Sure, you’ll want to research what kind of car and options you want, but also do your financial research. Use free online tools like payment calculators or vehicle valuation guides to help you prepare.

**Evaluate your wants and needs**
You may want the car with all the bells and whistles, but if it doesn’t fit into your budget, it’s not a wise purchase. Decide what you need versus what would be nice to have, and stick to that when negotiating.

**Create a double budget**
Whether you buy or lease, you’ll likely have a fixed amount to pay monthly for your new car. But that’s not the only cost to consider. Remember to factor in gas, insurance and any additional costs like maintenance or emergencies. A general guideline is to keep those total costs below 20 percent of your monthly take-home pay.

**Know your credit profile**
If you are planning to finance a vehicle, your credit score can affect whether you are approved for financing, as well as the rate you will receive. A number of financial institutions, like Ally, have begun providing customers with their FICO credit scores for free. Look into whether your bank is among them. You can also obtain your credit report from each of the credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian and Transunion) for free once yearly at annualcreditreport.com.

**Understand your options**
There are a few different options when buying or leasing a vehicle, such as paying cash, getting a loan from a bank or credit union, or negotiating a retail contract or lease through a dealership. If you finance your vehicle, the length of the finance contract can impact the total amount you pay. The longer you take to pay, the lower your monthly payments will be, but your total cost to finance rises. Visit different dealerships to learn your options. It’s up to you to decide the best arrangement for your personal financial situation.

**Stick with your plan**
If you plan to set aside a certain amount regularly for your monthly payment — do it! It’s easier to get ahead and build a savings plan instead of playing catch-up.

For more auto-related financial advice and for free resources, visit www.allywallewise.com.

If you’re considering buying or leasing a car, brush up on your finances so you’ll be better prepared to walk into the dealership.

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**Affordable Homeownership Sudbury, MA**

278 Maynard Road (MassHousing)

Two 2-Bedroom Units – $162,700
One 3-Bedroom Unit – $380,800

Sudbury Home Preservation Program (Local Action Units)

Single-Family Detached Homes (one to two units)

Maximum $210,000 (1BR house with land)

**Information Session:** Wed. 7/29/15, 7 pm
Goodnow Library – 21 Concord Road, Sudbury

Applications accepted through 9/23/15, 1 pm
Lottery: Thurs. 10/8/15 at 7 pm
Application and Lottery Information:
Housing@SudburyMa.US

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**Beaver Pond Commons in Milford**

Affordable Housing Lottery

www.s-e-b.com

2BR Duplex Homes for $158,200 & $161,700
2BR Single-Family Homes for $154,600
3BR Single-Family Homes for $174,800

This is a lottery for the 16 affordable Homes being built at Beaver Pond Commons. These 16 homes will be sold at affordable prices to households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. The first affordable homes will be ready in autumn/winter of 2015.

Beaver Pond Commons is Milford’s newest development and features easy access to 495. All affordable homes will all offer an attached garage, central air, open floor plan and large spacious bedrooms, hardwood floors in entry kitchen and family room, carpeted bedrooms, tiled baths, and first floor laundry room. Homes also include a self-cleaning range, microwave, dishwasher and refrigerator. Single family homes will have a 1st floor master suite and a vaulted family room and will be approx. 2,000 sqft!

The Maximum Income Limits for Households are as follows:

- $46,100 (1 person), $52,650 (2 people), $59,250 (3 people),
- $65,800 (4 people), $71,100 (5 people), $76,350 (6 people)

**Households cannot have more than $75,000 in assets.**

For more information on the Development, the Units or the Lottery and Application Process or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, please visit: www.s-e-b.com/lottery or call 617.782.6900.

Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received by 2 pm on September 24th, 2015

A Public Info Session will be held on August 18th, 2015 at 6:00 pm Milford Town Hall (52 Main St). The lottery will be on October 13th at 6 pm at the same location.

Applications and Information also available at the Milford Town Library on 80 Spruce St (Hours M-Th 9-9, Fri 9-6, Sat 9-5 closed all Sundays and Saturdays during the summer).

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**Assistant Property Manager Needed**

Villa Victoria Apartments located in the South End area in Boston, MA is looking for a full-time Assistant Property Manager.

Responsibilities include leasing and marketing, waitlist management, recertifications, rent collections, accounts payable, and overall office management.

Previous property management experience is preferred. Knowledge of Section 8 and LIHTC programs is preferred. COS, CPO or C3P designation is a plus.

Skill set includes excellent organizational and time management skills, great customer service skills, and good communication skills. Proficiency with Microsoft Office: Word, Excel and Outlook is required. Experience with Yardi is a plus. Bilingual in English/Cantonese is preferred.

Mercury levels rising in Massachusetts lakes

BY BETH DALEY AND MARTA CRAVIOTTO, NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Mercury emissions from major Massachusetts sources have declined by 90 percent over the past two decades, but mercury levels in the state’s freshwater fish holds stubbornly high, with many species too contaminated for pregnant women and children to eat.

Yet languid summer days and the lure of Massachusetts’ 3,000 freshwater bodies — from the Berkshire’s Lake Pontook to Boston’s Jamaica Pond — send many anglers casting for a fish dinner.

The inability to reduce mercury in fish to safe eating levels troubles environmental and health officials — and added to that concern is growing evidence that some freshwater fish in similar northern latitudes, from the great Lakes to Scandinavia, appear to have increasing mercury levels after years of decline. The New England Center for Investigative Reporting found six studies in the past decade that point to increasing mercury levels in freshwater fish.

“We need to figure out what is going on,” said Michael S. Hutcheson, former head of air and water toxics for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection who retired last month.

Reducing emissions in Massachusetts certainly helped — some freshwater fish near closed incinerators and other mercury sources showed a 44 percent decline in mercury levels — but the difficulty in getting further declining levels speaks to a more complex problem, he said.

Large numbers of people fish in the state’s lakes, ponds and rivers — 172,800 freshwater fish licenses were issued in the past year. But it is unknown exactly how frequently fishermen — or families — eat catch that might be contaminated.

On Boston’s Jamaica Pond one recent sunny afternoon, Shu Bao Chen of Boston tied bait to a hook as one of his two young girls dangled a fishing pole over the still water. He said he was unaware of the state’s blanket advisory that no children under 12 and no women of childbearing years should eat any fish from freshwater bodies in Massachusetts.

“Sundays and Saturdays, when he has time,” said Emily Chen, 13, translating for her father. The family came to Boston from China about five years ago and fish on the pond year-round. When asked what the family fishes for, Emily said “dinner.”

The state has a database of more than 200 lakes it has tested over time and, of those, 16 have fish mercury levels so high the state Department of Public Health says no one should eat fish from them.

Researchers are examining three leading reasons for the stubborn fish mercury levels: Mercury drifting on air currents from overseas power plants and small-scale gold mining operations, climate change and reductions in acid rain.

A magical, poisonous metal

Few elements on earth have sparked such mystery, lure and usefulness as mercury, a naturally occurring poisonous metal that has also been used as medicine in small doses.

While the metal can enter the atmosphere naturally, such as from volcanoes, much of the mercury in the air today comes from industrial activity. Most people who get too much mercury get it from eating seafood, especially tuna, but others can get it from freshwater fish. Trout that the state stocks in many lakes and ponds are safe to eat because they are usually caught before they have a chance to accumulate high levels of mercury.

Beth Daley is a reporter at the New England Center for Investigative Reporting, an independent, nonprofit news center based at Boston University and WGBH News. She can be reached bdaley@bu.edu. Follow her on Twitter at @bethbdaley. Marta Craviotto is an NECIR intern. Follow her at @MartaCraviotto. NECIR intern Meggie Quackenbush contributed to this report.