

H. RES. _____ / S. RES. _____

Expressing support for the designation of April 30 as
“National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”.

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of April 30 as
“National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”.

Whereas as many as 2.4 million individuals in the United States are chronically infected with hepatitis B, and as many as two-thirds of individuals with chronic hepatitis B are unaware of their infection;

Whereas hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver transmitted via infected blood and other body fluids, including through mother-to-child transmission and injection drug use;

Whereas hepatitis B is associated with significant disparities among communities of color (including Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, African immigrants), sexual and gender minority communities and those affected by the opioid crisis;

Whereas individuals with chronic diseases such as diabetes, HIV, hepatitis C, and chronic liver disease, and individuals on hemodialysis are at an increased risk for hepatitis B co-infection;

Whereas there is no cure for hepatitis B and individuals with chronic hepatitis B require lifelong medical care;

Whereas chronic hepatitis B represents one of the most common causes of liver cancer;

Whereas 1 in every 4 individuals with unmanaged chronic hepatitis B will develop liver cancer, cirrhosis, or liver failure, with liver cancer having a 5-year survival rate of only 18 percent in the United States;

Whereas safe and highly effective vaccines to protect against hepatitis B are available;

Whereas, in accordance with universal childhood hepatitis B vaccination recommendations in the United States, infants and children have been routinely vaccinated against hepatitis B since the 1990s;

Whereas all adults aged 19-59, and adults 60 and older with hepatitis B risk factors are recommended to be vaccinated against hepatitis B;

Whereas the hepatitis B vaccine, which is 95 percent effective and was the first anticancer vaccine to be developed, is projected to have prevented 310 million cases of hepatitis B worldwide from 1990 to 2020;

Whereas only 30 percent of adults in the United States are vaccinated against hepatitis B;

Whereas the number of reported acute hepatitis B cases increased by 11 percent nationwide between 2014 and 2018 in 2015;

Whereas, as a result of the ongoing drug use epidemic, there have been significant regional increases in acute hepatitis B cases in the United States, including—

- (1) a 489 percent increase in acute hepatitis B infections from 2015 to 2016 in Maine;
- (2) a reported 114 percent increase from 2009 to 2013 in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee;
- (3) a reported 78 percent increase in 2017 in southeastern Massachusetts; and
- (4) a reported 56 percent increase from 2014 to 2016 in North Carolina;

Whereas 36 percent of new hepatitis B cases are among people who inject drugs;

Whereas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hepatitis B is 50 to 100 times more infectious than HIV and 5 to 10 times more infectious than hepatitis C; and

Whereas there are significant opportunities, particularly within the setting of the drug use epidemic, to prevent new hepatitis B infections and thereby reduce the incidence of liver cancer and cirrhosis through efforts to—

- (1) increase adult hepatitis B vaccination; and

(2) maintain childhood hepatitis B vaccination:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the [House of Representatives/Senate]—

(1) supports the designation of April 30 as “National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”;

(2) recognizes the importance of providing support and encouragement—

(A) for all adults age 18 and older to be tested for hepatitis B at least once in their lifetime in accordance with recommendations;

(B) for individuals susceptible to infection to be vaccinated against hepatitis B; and

(C) for individuals diagnosed with hepatitis B to be linked to appropriate care; and

(3) in order to reduce the number of new hepatitis B infections and hepatitis B-related deaths, encourages a commitment to—

(A) increasing adult hepatitis B vaccination rates;

(B) maintaining childhood hepatitis B vaccination rates; and

(C) promoting provider and community awareness of adult hepatitis B vaccination.