

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 35

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 19

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 35—Relative to Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 7, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 35, Blakeslee. Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day.

This measure would declare May 19, 2009, to be Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day in California.

WHEREAS, Over 520 million people worldwide are chronically infected with viral hepatitis. Of those, over 5 million people in the United States are infected with hepatitis C and 1.5 million with hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that approximately 30,000 new cases of hepatitis C infection and 60,000 new cases of hepatitis B infection occur annually in the United States, with 15,000 Americans dying of viral hepatitis each year; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis can lead to liver disease, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure. Liver cancer from hepatitis B and C kills more people in California than anywhere else in the country; and

WHEREAS, Persons infected with the hepatitis virus are often unaware of their status for as long as 10 to 20 years and are unknowingly vectors for continued spread of the virus; and

WHEREAS, A study published in the January 6, 2009, issue of the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine* concluded that health care personnel in settings outside hospitals failed to follow basic infection control practices and exposed more than 60,000 patients in the United States to hepatitis B and C; and

WHEREAS, Although prevention of viral hepatitis is possible, and some treatments are available, many persons at risk or affected by these conditions are neither tested nor treated due to lack of knowledge or access to care; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis A and B can be prevented with vaccinations and therapies for hepatitis C have improved so that 40 percent to 80 percent of treated patients attain sustained viral elimination; and

WHEREAS, The cost of prevention can be as low as \$60 for vaccination for hepatitis B and even less for educational efforts to prevent all types of viral hepatitis, as opposed to a cost of \$750,000 for liver transplantation plus an additional \$70,000 per year to prevent organ rejection; and

WHEREAS, Estimates of the annual costs of hepatitis A in the United States have ranged from \$300 million to \$488.8 million in 1997 dollars. A

recent analysis estimated economic costs of \$133.5 million during the lifetime of a single age group of children; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis awareness education campaigns and accessible screening for hepatitis B and C, along with appropriate treatment, can reduce the damage from hepatitis B and C viral infection to individuals and to our community, financially as well as physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, May 19, 2009, will be the fifth annual World Hepatitis Awareness Day, a global day of awareness sponsored by the World Hepatitis Alliance. The theme, "Am I Number 12?" highlights the fact that one in 12 people, globally, suffer from hepatitis and what individual governments can do to prevent this; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California declares May 19, 2009, to be Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day in California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit sufficient copies of this resolution to the author for distribution.