

Introduced by Senator Fuller

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Salas)

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May 13, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 42—Relative to Valley Fever Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 42, as introduced, Fuller. Valley Fever Awareness Month.

This measure would declare August 2013 as Valley Fever Awareness Month.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Valley Fever (coccidioidomycosis), a progressive,
2 multisymptom, respiratory disorder, is a debilitating disease; and

3 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is caused by the inhalation of tiny
4 airborne fungi that live in the soil but are released into the air by
5 soil disturbance or wind; and

6 WHEREAS, Valley Fever attacks the respiratory system, causing
7 infections that can lead to symptoms that resemble a cold,
8 influenza, or pneumonia; and

9 WHEREAS, If left untreated or mistreated, infection can spread
10 from the lungs into the bloodstream, causing inflammation to the
11 skin, permanent damage to lung and bone tissue, and swelling of
12 the membrane surrounding the brain, leading to meningitis, which
13 can be devastating and even fatal; and

14 WHEREAS, Once serious symptoms of Valley Fever appear,
15 including pneumonia and labored breathing, prompt treatment with

1 often toxic antifungal drugs must be given, which is especially
2 disagreeable for patients who require the drugs to be injected
3 beneath the base of their skulls for meningitis and which can cause
4 side effects such as nausea, fever, and kidney damage; and

5 WHEREAS, Within California alone, Valley Fever is found in
6 portions of the Sacramento Valley, all of the San Joaquin Valley,
7 desert regions, and portions of southern California; and

8 WHEREAS, California does not have an official statewide
9 method of tracking the rate of Valley Fever infections; and

10 WHEREAS, In the last 10 years, infection rates in California
11 and Arizona have risen 400 percent, from an estimated 31 cases
12 for every 100,000 people in 1999 to 157 cases for every 100,000
13 people in 2011; and

14 WHEREAS, In Kern County, the rate of infection of Valley
15 Fever more than tripled from 2009, for a total of 2,051 cases in
16 2010 and 2,734 cases in 2011; and

17 WHEREAS, San Joaquin County Public Health Services
18 recorded 27 cases of Valley Fever in 2009, 46 cases in 2010, and
19 123 cases in 2011; and

20 WHEREAS, Valley Fever infection rates rose twelvefold
21 nationwide from 1995 to 2009, according to the Centers for Disease
22 Control and Prevention, and researchers estimate that the fungus
23 infects more than 150,000 people each year who either suffer
24 serious ailments without knowing the cause of their illness or
25 escape detection of the disease; and

26 WHEREAS, Misdiagnosis of Valley Fever is so pervasive that
27 experts say that some people suffer and even die from Valley Fever
28 without knowing they ever had the disease; and

29 WHEREAS, Central Valley prison inmates are being infected
30 by Valley Fever at epidemic rates, contributing significantly to the
31 state's prison health care costs; and

32 WHEREAS, The rapid spread of Valley Fever at state prisons
33 in the Central Valley has resulted in multiple prison inmate deaths
34 and prompted calls to close certain affected prisons, further
35 exacerbating efforts to comply with federal orders to reduce prison
36 overcrowding; and

37 WHEREAS, Valley Fever kills between 100 to 200 more
38 Americans every year than tuberculosis; and

1 WHEREAS, Valley Fever most seriously affects the young, the
2 elderly, those with lowered immune systems, and those of African
3 American and Filipino descent; and

4 WHEREAS, Valley Fever is a disease that has been studied for
5 the past 100 years but still remains impossible to control and
6 difficult to treat; and

7 WHEREAS, There is, to date, no known cure for Valley Fever,
8 but researchers are closer than ever to finding a much-needed
9 vaccine against this devastating disease; and

10 WHEREAS, The research effort to find a vaccine for Valley
11 Fever and a funding partnership including the State of California
12 were approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Wilson
13 in 1997; now, therefore, be it

14 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
15 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature does hereby proclaim
16 August 2013 as Valley Fever Awareness Month; and be it further

17 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
18 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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