
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SEEK INCREASED
FEDERAL FUNDING TO INITIATE MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND
WIDESPREAD HEPATITIS B EDUCATION, PREVENTION, AND TREATMENT
PROGRAMS IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, there are an estimated 800,000 to 1.4 million
2 Americans chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus, of
3 whom 20 to 30 percent acquired their infection in childhood; and
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5 WHEREAS, without vaccination, chronic infection of
6 hepatitis B occurs in 90 percent of infants infected at birth,
7 30 percent of children infected at age one to five years, and
8 six percent of persons infected after age five; and
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10 WHEREAS, without vaccination against hepatitis B, death
11 from chronic liver disease occurs in 15 to 25 percent of
12 chronically infected persons; and
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14 WHEREAS, the symptoms of hepatitis B are usually jaundice,
15 fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and
16 joint pain; and
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18 WHEREAS, nearly all infants and children and about 30
19 percent of persons infected in adulthood show no outward signs
20 or symptoms of being infected with hepatitis B; and
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22 WHEREAS, transmission of hepatitis B occurs when blood or
23 body fluids from an infected person enters the body of a person
24 who is not immune; and
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26 WHEREAS, the hepatitis B virus is often spread through
27 unprotected sexual intercourse, the sharing of needles in drug
28 abuse, exposure to drug-injection needles and other sharp
29 instruments on the job, and transmission from an infected mother
30 to a newborn during birth; and



1 WHEREAS, the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and
 2 Human Services' Office of Minority Health reports that chronic
 3 hepatitis B and liver cancer caused by hepatitis B in Asian
 4 Americans, native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders comprise
 5 one of the most serious but frequently neglected racial and
 6 ethnic health disparities in the U.S.; and

7
 8 WHEREAS, while acute hepatitis B cases in the U.S. have
 9 declined, the high frequency of chronic hepatitis B among Asian
 10 Americans, native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders,
 11 particularly the foreign-born, seems to have remained relatively
 12 constant; and

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 14 WHEREAS, according to the Hawaii Chapter of the Liver
 15 Foundation, Hawaii has the highest rate of liver cancer in the
 16 country caused by hepatitis B and C, with an estimated 12,000 to
 17 36,000 residents living with hepatitis B; and

18
 19 WHEREAS, the best way to prevent infection with hepatitis B
 20 is through vaccination, which has been available since 1982;
 21 now, therefore,

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 23 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 24 Twenty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
 25 of 2009, the Senate concurring, that Hawaii's Congressional
 26 delegation is hereby urged to seek increased federal funding to
 27 initiate more comprehensive and widespread hepatitis B
 28 education, prevention, and treatment programs in Hawaii; and

29
 30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 31 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to Hawaii's Congressional
 32 delegation, the Governor, and Director of Health.

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