
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING ONGOING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HEP FREE HAWAII, AND OTHERS TO PRODUCE A STATEWIDE PLAN TO ELIMINATE VIRAL HEPATITIS IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, approximately 4,000 preventable hepatitis-related
2 deaths occur worldwide each day, even though there is an
3 effective cure for hepatitis C and a vaccine and effective
4 treatment for hepatitis B; and

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6 WHEREAS, approximately three hundred million individuals
7 worldwide are living with viral hepatitis but are unaware of
8 their condition and therefore unable to take actions to protect
9 themselves and others; and

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11 WHEREAS, the federal Centers for Disease Control and
12 Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination against hepatitis B for
13 all infants, all children younger than nineteen years of age who
14 have not been vaccinated, individuals with hepatitis C or human
15 immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, individuals with chronic
16 liver disease, individuals at risk for infection by exposure to
17 blood or by sexual exposure, imprisoned individuals, and
18 international travelers to countries where hepatitis B is
19 common; and

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21 WHEREAS, the CDC recommends that individuals born between
22 1945 and 1965 be tested for hepatitis C; and

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24 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Opioid Initiative State Plan recognizes
25 that the opioid epidemic has contributed to increasing hepatitis
26 infections across the United States, including among youth; and

27
28 WHEREAS, increasing insurance coverage and developing more
29 safe and effective medications for combating hepatitis B and



1 curing hepatitis C have made the prevention, screening, and
2 treatment of both diseases increasingly accessible and
3 worthwhile; and

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5 WHEREAS, Hawaii has one of the highest rates of liver
6 cancer in the nation, the leading causes of which are hepatitis
7 B and C; and

8
9 WHEREAS, there are up to 63,000 individuals in the State
10 possibly affected with hepatitis B or C; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the State is currently engaged in proactive
13 measures to combat viral hepatitis among underserved and at-risk
14 communities, including:

- 15
16 (1) Recently expanding Med-QUEST access to hepatitis C
17 medications, pursuant to recommendations from the
18 American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases;
19
20 (2) Maintaining its longstanding syringe access program to
21 curb the spread of hepatitis C among individuals who
22 inject drugs;
23
24 (3) Identifying and supporting foreign-born pregnant women
25 and their families at risk for hepatitis B; and
26
27 (4) Ensuring that homeless communities are immunized
28 against hepatitis A to prevent outbreaks; and
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30 WHEREAS, the Harm Reduction Services Branch of the
31 Department of Health offers many viral hepatitis services
32 through the Viral Hepatitis Education and Prevention Program,
33 including vaccines, testing, education, training, and community
34 engagement; and

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36 WHEREAS, Hep Free Hawaii was formed as a community
37 coalition of over ninety partners and stakeholders, including
38 medical professionals, public health professionals, community
39 advocates, and harm reduction providers -- all dedicated to
40 increasing awareness of and access to viral hepatitis B and C
41 care services in Hawaii; and
42



1 WHEREAS, Hep Free Hawaii's mission is to raise awareness of
2 and increase access for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment
3 of liver disease, especially viral hepatitis and related harms;
4 and
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6 WHEREAS, the federal Department of Health and Human
7 Services has issued a National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan,
8 recommending collaborative efforts to prevent new infections;
9 reduce deaths and improve health; reduce disparities; and
10 coordinate, monitor, and report on activities; and
11

12 WHEREAS, the vision of the National Viral Hepatitis Action
13 Plan is as follows: "The United States will be a place where new
14 viral hepatitis infections have been eliminated, where all
15 people with chronic hepatitis B and C know their status, and
16 everyone with chronic hepatitis B and C has access to high
17 quality health care and curative treatments, free from stigma
18 and discrimination."; and
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20 WHEREAS, the National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan
21 recognizes the disproportionate impact of viral hepatitis on
22 some populations, including baby boomers, individuals who inject
23 drugs, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian-Americans and
24 Pacific Islanders, African-Americans, individuals in
25 correctional facilities, veterans, homeless individuals, men who
26 have sex with men, pregnant women, and individuals with HIV; and
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28 WHEREAS, the National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan
29 identified several challenges that need to be addressed to
30 improve the response to viral hepatitis, including limited data,
31 low provider awareness, low public awareness and low perceived
32 risk, limited public health and health system response, the high
33 cost of treatment, and stigma and discrimination; and
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35 WHEREAS, a growing number of states, localities, health
36 systems, and non-governmental organizations have undertaken a
37 range of collaborative efforts aimed at elimination of viral
38 hepatitis; and
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40 WHEREAS, the Harm Reduction Services Branch of the
41 Department of Health; Hep Free Hawaii; and other stakeholders,
42 including the Lieutenant Governor, have declared the elimination



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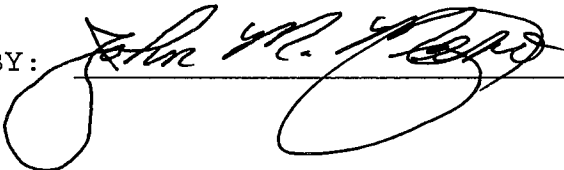
1 of viral hepatitis in Hawaii an achievable and important
 2 priority, with implementation planning initiated at the Hawaii
 3 Hepatitis Elimination Planning Summit in Honolulu on July 28,
 4 2019; now, therefore,

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 6 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
 7 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of
 8 2020, the Senate concurring, that this body hereby recognizes
 9 and supports the ongoing collaborative efforts between the
 10 Department of Health, Hep Free Hawaii, and others to produce a
 11 Statewide plan to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawaii, which
 12 would be the first of its kind in the nation; and

13
 14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this statewide plan, including
 15 plans for implementation and any recommended legislation, will
 16 be presented at an informational briefing to the Legislature
 17 prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021; and

18
 19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 20 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant
 21 Governor, Director of Health, Branch Chief of the Harm Reduction
 22 Services Branch of the Department of Health, and Executive
 23 Director of the Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center.

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OFFERED BY: 

FEB 28 2020

