

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 675

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C currently infects nearly 4 million Americans, including an estimated 218,000 to 325,000 Texans, and up to 75 percent of those affected are unaware that they are infected because the disease often takes years, or even decades, to cause symptoms; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C becomes chronic for over 75 percent of those affected with the disease, and it is the leading cause of catastrophic liver damage, or cirrhosis, and liver cancer; the disease is the most common reason for liver transplants and causes costly long-term health problems; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C has many faces in Texas and disproportionately affects this state's veterans, aging baby boomers, and minority populations; it is the most prevalent bloodborne disease in the United States and in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Individuals who do not know that they are infected can suffer potentially life-threatening liver damage and can unknowingly transmit the disease to others; and

WHEREAS, Risks for transmission are associated with exposure to contaminated blood through blood transfusions, blood products, organ transplants, needle-stick injuries in health care settings, unsterilized medical or tattoo equipment, sharing of personal care items such as razors or toothbrushes, or being born to a hepatitis C-infected mother; and

WHEREAS, The course of this disease can be changed with screening linked to appropriate care, which can reduce liver cancer risk by 70 percent and mortality by 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, In the absence of a vaccine for hepatitis C, emphasis must be placed on other means of disease prevention, including education of health care workers, emergency services workers, veterans, and the general public; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released updated guidelines calling for everyone born between 1945 and 1965 to receive a one-time hepatitis C test, which would save over 100,000 lives; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the United States Preventive Services Task Force issued a Grade B, or recommended, rating for screening for hepatitis C virus infection in persons at high risk for infection and adults born between 1945 and 1965; and

WHEREAS, Early detection of hepatitis C infection promotes effective management and treatment of this infection and helps to prevent disability and loss of productivity and income; with timely intervention, those affected by the disease can live full, satisfying, and productive lives; and

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WHEREAS, Hepatitis C awareness education campaigns and accessible screening for hepatitis C can lead to early diagnosis and create a pivotal opportunity to link patients to care and appropriate treatment as a critical component of strategic efforts to reduce the burden and spread of hepatitis C; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby recognize the month of May 2015 as Hepatitis C Awareness Month and urge all Texans to educate themselves about the causes, symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments for hepatitis C throughout this month and every month.

Hinojosa

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 4, 2015.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate