

MAR 06 2020

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# SENATE 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  
23

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

4  
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

29  
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

35  
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



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  
5

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  
19

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  
27

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  
34

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



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,


5  
 6 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature  
 7 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, the House of  
 8 Representatives concurring, that this body hereby recognizes and  
 9 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.

24  
 25  
 26

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