
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO VIRAL HEPATITIS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the department of
2 health reports that hepatitis B and C viral infections are
3 associated with earlier deaths and higher death rates in Hawaii.
4 From 2000 to 2020, yearly mortality rates associated with
5 hepatitis B were higher in Hawaii compared to the entire United
6 States, with three times higher death rates in 2019 alone.
7 These death rates were notably higher among Asian and Pacific
8 Islander residents compared to the rest of the State.
9 Furthermore, from 2018 to 2021, eighty-eight per cent of
10 Hawaii's residents with hepatitis C died before reaching the
11 average life expectancy for the rest of the State. These deaths
12 continue to occur in Hawaii despite the availability of
13 effective tools to prevent, treat, and even cure these
14 infections. To address the burden of viral hepatitis in Hawaii,
15 the department of health has successfully leveraged community
16 and state partnerships to convene the "Hep Free 2030: The
17 Hawai'i Hepatitis Elimination Strategy 2020-2030". The coalition



1 has made progress towards eliminating viral hepatitis by
2 focusing on five priority areas: awareness and education; access
3 to services; advocacy at all levels; equity in everything; and
4 data for decision-making. In 2021, the legislature adopted
5 House Concurrent Resolution No. 59, H.D. 1, which found that
6 continued coordination and ongoing efforts are needed to further
7 implement the statewide strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis
8 types A, B, and C in Hawaii. However, there has been no state
9 funding dedicated to the prevention, management, and treatment
10 of viral hepatitis infections.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to expand the
12 State's capacity to address preventable morbidity and mortality
13 from viral hepatitis B and hepatitis C among Hawaii residents
14 through established and innovative public health interventions.

15 SECTION 2. Chapter 325, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 amended by adding four new sections to part V to be
17 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

18 "§325- Definitions. As used in this part, "department"
19 means the department of health.

20 §325- Hepatitis prevention program. (a) The
21 department may establish and administer a hepatitis prevention



1 program to prevent morbidity and mortality among Hawaii
2 residents due to hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

3 (b) The hepatitis prevention program shall prioritize:

4 (1) Hepatitis awareness and education;

5 (2) Increasing access to services;

6 (3) Assuring health equity and addressing the social
7 determinants of health as they relate to hepatitis;

8 and

9 (4) The collection, analysis, and reporting of relevant
10 data to support hepatitis prevention and treatment.

11 **§325- Awareness and education.** The department shall
12 develop and implement throughout the State an educational
13 program for the purpose of informing the community how to
14 identify and prevent hepatitis B and hepatitis C and aid in its
15 early diagnosis. In furtherance of the hepatitis prevention
16 program, the department may assist and cooperate with any or all
17 territorial, state, and national organizations conducting
18 educational programs for the prevention and control of hepatitis
19 B and hepatitis C.

20 **§325- Comprehensive hepatitis B and hepatitis C**
21 **prevention plan; screening; treatment support.** The department



1 shall develop a statewide, comprehensive hepatitis B and
2 hepatitis C prevention plan. The plan shall include hepatitis B
3 and hepatitis C screening and services to support individuals
4 with hepatitis to access care and treatment. The department may
5 work with other government agencies, health care providers,
6 health insurers, and community stakeholders to improve overall
7 rates of screening, diagnosis, and treatment of hepatitis B and
8 hepatitis C."

9 SECTION 3. Section 325-92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended to read as follows:

11 "~~{}\$325-92{}~~ **Prenatal hepatitis B screening and**
12 **treatment of newborns.** The department [~~of health~~] may adopt
13 rules necessary to provide appropriate hepatitis B screening of
14 pregnant women, including reporting and follow-up procedures for
15 newborns of hepatitis B carrier mothers. [~~The department may~~
16 ~~provide medications necessary for the treatment of newborns of~~
17 ~~indigent and medically indigent carrier mothers.]"~~

18 SECTION 4. Section 325-91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
19 repealed.

20 [~~{}\$325-91 Blood transfusion; hepatitis.~~] In the
21 ~~procuring, furnishing, donating, processing, distributing or~~



1 ~~using of human whole blood, plasma, blood products or blood~~
 2 ~~derivatives for the purpose of injecting or transfusing in the~~
 3 ~~human body, there shall be no implied warranty that the blood,~~
 4 ~~plasma, products or derivatives are free from the virus of serum~~
 5 ~~hepatitis as long as there is no known scientific test to detect~~
 6 ~~the virus of serum hepatitis."]~~

7 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
 8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so
 9 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
 10 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
 11 year 2026-2027 for the establishment and implementation of the
 12 hepatitis prevention program, including the establishment of the
 13 following positions within the department of health:

- 14 (1) _____ full-time equivalent (_____ FTE) program
 15 _____ specialist V position;
 - 16 (2) _____ full-time equivalent (_____ FTE) epidemiological
 17 _____ specialist; and
 - 18 (3) _____ full-time equivalent (_____ FTE) office assistant
- 19 III.

20 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
 21 of health for the purposes of this Act.



1 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

DOH; Viral Hepatitis; Prevention; Awareness; Education;
Screenings; Treatment Support; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and appropriates funds for a Hepatitis Prevention Program within the Department of Health to address morbidity and mortality due to hepatitis B and C. Repeals an outdated reference to hepatitis and blood transfusions. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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