

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 177

Expressing support for the designation of April 30, 2019, as “National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2019

Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of April 30, 2019, as “National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”.

Whereas, as many as 2,200,000 individuals in the United States are chronically infected with hepatitis B, and as many as  $\frac{2}{3}$  of those individuals are unaware of the infection;

Whereas hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver that is transmitted via infected blood and other bodily fluids, including through—

- (1) mother-to-child transmission; and
- (2) injection drug use;

Whereas individuals with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, HIV, hepatitis C, and chronic liver disease, and individ-

uals on hemodialysis, are at an increased risk for hepatitis B co-infection;

Whereas there is no cure for hepatitis B, and individuals with chronic hepatitis B require lifelong medical care;

Whereas chronic hepatitis B is a common cause of liver cancer;

Whereas 1 in every 4 individuals with unmanaged chronic hepatitis B will develop liver cancer, cirrhosis, or liver failure, with liver cancer having a 5-year survival rate of only 18 percent in the United States;

Whereas safe and highly effective vaccines to protect against hepatitis B are available;

Whereas, in accordance with universal childhood hepatitis B vaccination recommendations in the United States, infants and children in the United States have routinely been vaccinated against hepatitis B since the 1990s;

Whereas the hepatitis B vaccine, which is 95 percent effective and was the first anticancer vaccine to be developed, is projected to prevent 310,000,000 cases of hepatitis B worldwide from 1990 to 2020;

Whereas only 25 percent of adults in the United States are vaccinated against hepatitis B;

Whereas the number of reported acute hepatitis B cases increased by 20 percent nationwide in 2015;

Whereas, as a result of the opioid epidemic, there have been significant regional increases in acute hepatitis B cases in the United States, including—

(1) a reported 729-percent increase from 2015 to 2017 in Maine;

(2) a reported 114-percent increase from 2009 to 2013 in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee;

(3) a reported 78-percent increase in 2017 in southeastern Massachusetts; and

(4) a reported 62-percent increase from 2012 to 2016 in North Carolina;

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hepatitis B is 50 to 100 times more infectious than HIV, and 5 to 10 times more infectious than hepatitis C; and

Whereas there are significant opportunities, particularly within the setting of the opioid epidemic, to prevent new hepatitis B infections, and thereby reduce the incidence of liver cancer and cirrhosis, through efforts to—

(1) increase adult hepatitis B vaccination; and

(2) maintain childhood hepatitis B vaccination: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) supports the designation of April 30, 2019,  
3       as “National Adult Hepatitis B Vaccination Awareness Day”;  
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5               (2) recognizes the importance of providing support and encouragement—  
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7                       (A) for all individuals to be tested for hepatitis B;  
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9                       (B) for individuals susceptible to infection  
10       to be vaccinated against hepatitis B; and

11                      (C) for individuals diagnosed with hepatitis  
12       B to be linked to appropriate care; and

1           (3) in order to reduce the number of new hepa-  
2           titis B infections and hepatitis B-related deaths, en-  
3           courages a commitment to—

4                   (A) increasing adult hepatitis B vaccina-  
5                   tion rates;

6                   (B) maintaining childhood hepatitis B vac-  
7                   cination rates; and

8                   (C) promoting provider and community  
9                   awareness of adult hepatitis B vaccination.

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