

Legislation Text

File #: 150428, **Version:** 0

Declaring May 2015 to be Hepatitis Awareness Month in Philadelphia to recognize and support the joint efforts of “Hep B United Philadelphia” and “Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia” coalitions aimed at raising the profile of Viral Hepatitis as an urgent local health priority.

WHEREAS, The Hepatitis B and C viruses are serious public health concerns; an estimated 4.4 million Americans and over 65,000 Philadelphians are living with these viruses, which are leading causes of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation; most people infected with hepatitis B and C do not even know they are infected; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B is the world’s most serious liver infection, causing over 80% of primary liver cancer cases in the world, disproportionately impacting people of Asian, Pacific Islander, and African descent; killing 1 in 4 chronically infected persons prematurely from cirrhosis, liver cancer or liver failure; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B is completely preventable with a safe and effective vaccine but less than 40% of high-risk individuals are vaccinated against Hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, Over 20,000 Philadelphians are living with hepatitis B and the majority of those infected are unaware of their infection; more people need to be tested because this lifelong infection can be controlled with medication, thereby halting progression to liver cancer, liver failure and death; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia’s Asian communities are disproportionately affected, with infection rates ranging from 4%-23% but fortunately, they are supported by Hep B United Philadelphia, celebrating its 5th year as the largest local community-based coalition working to eliminate health disparities faced by Asian Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is the most common bloodborne infection in the U.S. and since a majority of people living with the virus do not even know they are infected, hepatitis C now kills more people than HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, over 45,000 Philadelphians are living with Hepatitis C but fewer than 10% have made it to a specialist to receive care and treatment for the virus; a cure for Hepatitis C is now available and all Philadelphians living with the hepatitis C virus deserve access to medication that can eliminate their illness and prevent the physical and financial costs associated with serious liver disease; and

WHEREAS, the Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia is made up of hospitals, city agencies, community based organizations, and people living with hepatitis C who work together to develop strategies to improve the number of people who know their hepatitis C status and advocate for more equitable access to curative therapies; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between Hep B United Philadelphia and Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia has led to: the recognition of Philadelphia as a national leader in the fight against viral hepatitis; the mobilization of

local stakeholders to raise the public profile of viral hepatitis as an urgent health priority; the establishment of strong private-public partnerships; the identification of gaps in local Hepatitis B and C services, and development of innovative projects to improve access to Hepatitis prevention, testing, and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to fight viral hepatitis by Hep B United Philadelphia and Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia are supported by the people of Philadelphia, including multitudes of community members, healthcare institutions, schools of medicine and public health, students, community and cultural organizations, local businesses, academics, and the Philadelphia Medical Society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That May 2015 is declared Hepatitis Awareness Month in Philadelphia to recognize and support the joint efforts of “Hep B United Philadelphia” and “Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia” aimed at raising the profile of viral hepatitis and liver cancer as an urgent health priority.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of Philadelphia supports testing all high-risk Philadelphians for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Hepatitis B Foundation as the lead organization of Hep B United Philadelphia, and to the Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia, further evidencing the sincere support and admiration of this legislative body.