

Legislation Text

File #: 130320, Version: 0

Declaring May 2013 to be Hepatitis B Awareness Month in Philadelphia to recognize and support the “Hep B United Philadelphia” Campaign aimed at raising the profile of Hepatitis B and liver cancer as an urgent health priority.

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B is the world’s most serious common liver infection that is caused by the Hepatitis B virus; causes over 80% of primary liver cancer cases in the world; disproportionately impacts people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, with nearly one in ten Asian Americans being chronically infected with Hepatitis B; and will result in the premature death of 1 in 4 chronically infected persons from cirrhosis, liver cancer or liver failure; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B is completely preventable with a safe and effective vaccine that is known as the “first anti-cancer vaccine” since it can prevent liver cancer; and can be diagnosed with a simple blood test and treated with approved therapies to control the disease and stop progression to liver cancer, liver failure and death; and

WHEREAS, There is an important Hepatitis B Philadelphia Story in that the Hepatitis B virus was discovered by Dr. Baruch Blumberg at the Fox Chase Cancer Center, and he invented the first Hepatitis B vaccine that is now manufactured by only two companies which are both located in the Philadelphia region. The first animal that was discovered to be the most useful in studying Hepatitis B was a groundhog living at the Philadelphia Zoo. And, the only national nonprofit dedicated to finding a cure for Hepatitis B was established in the Philadelphia Area; and

WHEREAS, There are 3,000 new cases among Philadelphians every year, the majority of those infected are unaware of their infection, infection rates in Philadelphia Asian communities range from 4%-23%, and less than 40% of high-risk individuals are vaccinated against Hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, Hep B United Philadelphia Coalition has been actively raising awareness for hepatitis B through outreach events, offering free education to more than 5,000 Philadelphia residents, providing more than 1,800 free hepatitis B screening tests, assisting over 100 infected individuals obtain health care resources, and administering over 300 free hepatitis B vaccine shots with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Mobile Hepatitis B Vaccine Clinic since May, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Hep B United Philadelphia Coalition’s efforts are establishing Philadelphia as the premier community-based hepatitis B care model city in the nation and a city that champions justice against health disparities; and

WHEREAS, Hep B United Philadelphia Coalition will be holding its annual awareness event on May 17, 2013 at the Rocky Steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in support of the Hep B United Philadelphia Campaign to promote both vaccinations and testing for early detection, which will save thousands of lives; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That May 2013 is declared Hepatitis B Awareness Month in Philadelphia to recognize and support the “Hep B United Philadelphia” Campaign aimed at raising the profile of Hepatitis B and liver cancer as an urgent health priority.

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