

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

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HOUSE RESOLUTION 1332

Sponsors: Representative Wright.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

June 18, 2003

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO
2 ADDRESS ISSUES RELATING TO THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS.

3 Whereas, Hepatitis C virus infection is the most common chronic blood borne
4 viral infection in the United States; and

5 Whereas, Hepatitis C virus infection is a life-threatening disease that the
6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conservatively estimate infects four million
7 persons in the United States; and

8 Whereas, there were approximately 41,000 newly infected Hepatitis C
9 patients per year as of 1998; and

10 Whereas, Hepatitis C infections accounted for approximately 25,000 deaths
11 per year in 1998 and is predicted to cause 30,000 annual deaths within 10 years; and

12 Whereas, Hepatitis C infection is three to four times more prevalent in the
13 United States than HIV/AIDS, and approximately one-third of all HIV infected persons
14 are co-infected with HCV; and

15 Whereas, 85 percent of Hepatitis C virus-infected persons are chronically
16 infected; and

17 Whereas, infected individuals serve as a source of transmission to others; and

18 Whereas, very few of those infected with Hepatitis C virus are aware that
19 they are infected, since symptoms often do not develop until 10 to 20 years after the
20 infection is contracted; and

21 Whereas, infected individuals who are unaware that they are infected are
22 unlikely to take precautions to prevent the spread or exacerbation of their infection; and

23 Whereas, no vaccine is available for Hepatitis C virus, but treatments are
24 available to slow the progression of the infection; and

25 Whereas, between 3.6 and 3.8 million of the four million people who are
26 infected with Hepatitis C are receiving no treatment; and

27 Whereas, Hepatitis C is now the leading cause of liver disease, placing
28 infected individuals at elevated risk for chronic liver disease, liver cancer, and other
29 Hepatitis C virus-related disease, such as Type II diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and
30 other life-threatening conditions that can lead to liver failure; and

1 Whereas, data suggests that 15 to 20% of people with Hepatitis C will
2 develop cirrhosis of the liver within five years of contracting the virus, and up to 25%
3 may develop cirrhosis in 10 to 20 years; and

4 Whereas, Hepatitis C is the cause for one-third of liver transplants, which cost
5 approximately \$280,000 each; and

6 Whereas, annually, the costs associated with liver transplants for Hepatitis C
7 are nearly 300 million dollars; and

8 Whereas, alcohol consumption is an important contributing factor in the
9 progression of chronic liver disease among persons with Hepatitis C virus infections;
10 and

11 Whereas, conservative estimates now place the cost of lost-productivity and
12 medical care arising from Hepatitis C virus infection in the United States to be in excess
13 of 600 million dollars annually; and such cost will undoubtedly increase without
14 education and prevention efforts; Now, therefore,

15 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

16 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives urges local health departments
17 and other State agencies and institutions to work collaboratively to address the national
18 health crisis associated with Hepatitis C virus through the following measures:

- 19 (1) Recommending implementation of prevention and education activities
20 by State and local public health programs to counsel and screen
21 persons at risk for Hepatitis C virus infection.
- 22 (2) Recommending the monitoring and evaluation of the infection rate of
23 Hepatitis C.
- 24 (3) Recommending that publicly funded programs ensure that Hepatitis C
25 related treatments are made available to persons of all ages.
- 26 (4) Recommending implementation of outreach and community-based
27 programs to educate health care professionals concerning diagnosis,
28 medical management, and prevention by relying upon information
29 recently released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

30 **SECTION 2.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.