

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SR 2050

SPONSOR: Senator Peaden

SUBJECT: Increased Funding for Hepatitis Prevention and Treatment

DATE: March 5, 2004

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Munroe</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>HC</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>RC</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

The resolution urges support for increased funding at the state and federal levels for hepatitis prevention and treatment. The whereas clauses of the resolution express legislative findings. The Senate of the State of Florida resolves that the Senate supports the prevention and control of viral hepatitis through counseling and screening of all persons at risk for viral hepatitis, immunizing children and adults at increased risk, monitoring and evaluating hepatitis infection rates, educating health care providers, and enhancing social support and medical referral services to persons infected with viral hepatitis.

## II. Present Situation:

The disease hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, which may be caused by:

- Infections from parasites, bacteria, or viruses (such as Hepatitis A, B, or C);
- Liver damage from alcohol, drugs, or poisonous mushrooms;
- An overdose of acetaminophen; or
- Immune cells in the body attacking the liver and causing autoimmune hepatitis.

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can affect anyone. In the United States, hepatitis A occurs in situations ranging from isolated cases of disease to widespread epidemics.<sup>1</sup> Prevention of hepatitis A is based on proper hand washing, prophylaxis of close contacts to a case, and vaccination of high risk groups. Careful hand washing, with particular attention to fingernails and fingertips, should be done after using the toilet, changing a

<sup>1</sup> See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Infectious Diseases, "Hepatitis" cited at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.htm>>.

diaper, or handling an animal, and before eating or preparing food. Hepatitis A is the least serious of the viral hepatitis diseases. Over 85 percent of people with hepatitis A recover within 3 months, and over 99 percent of people recover by 6 months. The fatality rate is estimated at 0.1 percent. There is no specific treatment for Hepatitis A. Hepatitis A does not become a chronic disease. There are approximately 100,000 total infections in the U. S. every year.

Hepatitis B virus is a bloodborne and sexually transmitted virus that is acquired by exposure to blood or other body fluids of an infected person.<sup>2</sup> Most people who become infected with hepatitis B virus get rid of the virus within 6 months. A short infection is known as an “acute” case of hepatitis B. Acute hepatitis B can be severe, and cause serious clinical complications such as cirrhosis and liver cancer, which are more likely to develop in chronically infected persons. Approximately 10 percent of people infected with the hepatitis B virus develop a chronic, life-long infection. In the United States, approximately 1.2 million persons have chronic hepatitis B virus infection and are sources for hepatitis B virus transmission to others. Both hepatitis A and hepatitis B are preventable by vaccination.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus, which is found in the blood of persons who have the disease. The hepatitis C virus is spread by contact with the blood of an infected person.<sup>3</sup> Many people who are infected with the hepatitis C virus do not have symptoms. Hepatitis C is one of the most common causes of chronic liver disease in the U.S. today. At least 80 percent of patients with acute hepatitis C ultimately develop chronic liver infection, and 20 percent to 30 percent develop cirrhosis. Between 1 percent and 5 percent of patients may develop liver cancer. Hepatitis C is now the number 1 cause for liver transplantation in the U.S.

The Florida Legislature enacted chapter 2000-367, Laws of Florida, to require the Florida Department of Health to develop a hepatitis A awareness program which includes information regarding the availability of hepatitis A vaccine. The department is authorized to work with private businesses and associations in developing the hepatitis A awareness program and in disseminating the information. According to the Florida Department of Health, the Hepatitis and Liver Failure Prevention and Control program was appropriated about \$1.36 million during fiscal year 2003-2004. The department receives about \$1.96 million in federal funds for hepatitis. The federal funds come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant titled *State Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases* and is managed by the Bureau of Epidemiology of the Florida Department of Health. The Bureau of HIV/AIDS of the Florida Department of Health receives a portion of this grant for hepatitis prevention and education. According to the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), Congress appropriated about \$2.7 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for viral hepatitis in fiscal year 2004.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Incidence of Acute Hepatitis B - United States, 1990—2002,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 52(51), pp. 1252-1254, January 2, 2004. The report found that the incidence of Hepatitis B declined among populations that were vaccinated and recommended that to reduce HBV transmission further in the United States, hepatitis B vaccination programs are needed that target men who have sex with men, injection-drug users, and other adults at high risk.

<sup>3</sup> See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Infectious Diseases, “Hepatitis” cited at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.htm>>.

<sup>4</sup> NASTAD requested an increase of \$64 million in Fiscal Year 2004 for viral hepatitis programs at CDC in order to increase the ability of state and local health departments to integrate, as appropriate, hepatitis prevention programs with HIV/AIDS prevention programs and to provide vaccines to high-risk individuals. Cited at:

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The resolution expresses legislative findings that the three hepatitis viruses, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C, cause significant morbidity and mortality in Florida. An estimated 1.25 million persons are chronically infected with hepatitis B in the United States. Hepatitis A continues to be one of the most frequently reported vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States. An estimated 270,000 Floridians are currently infected with hepatitis C and most are unaware of their infection. If left undetected, hepatitis B and hepatitis C can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure, or death. The Hepatitis and Liver Failure Prevention and Control program of the Florida Department of Health has integrated with other public health and private providers to enhance prevention and control efforts. Hepatitis A and hepatitis B are preventable by vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults at increased risk for infection or serious consequences of infection receive vaccination for hepatitis A and hepatitis B to prevent infection and improve health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults at increased risk for infection and or serious consequences of infection receive testing for hepatitis B and hepatitis C to become aware of their status, to prevent disease transmission, and to improve health.

Key medical organizations state that the federal and state governments have important roles in supporting not only vaccine purchase, but also in creating infrastructure that can further expand and appropriately handle more aggressive national immunization goals. These organizations have recommended that federal and state governments need additional funds to purchase vaccines for the uninsured and underinsured adult populations. Florida has adopted national immunization goals along with additional goals of increasing the testing available to adults at high risk for hepatitis C. Identification of hepatitis-C infected persons through laboratory testing allows for counseling to prevent further spread of the disease, along with vaccination against hepatitis A and hepatitis B, which can cause additional liver damage. Persons with acute or chronic viral hepatitis can experience improved quality and length of life from education, social support, and medical referral.

The Senate of the State of Florida resolves that the Senate supports the prevention and control of viral hepatitis through the following measures:

- Implementing prevention and education activities by state and local public health programs to counsel and screen all persons at risk for viral hepatitis;
- Purchasing and distributing hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines to immunize adult residents at increased risk for such infection or the serious consequences of infection;
- Using both pediatric and adult hepatitis B vaccine and other prevention services to immunize all children and adults at increased risks, thereby eliminating transmission of hepatitis B in Florida;
- Ensuring surveillance and evaluation of the infection rates of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C;

- Implementing programs to educate all health care providers about diagnosis, medical management, and prevention of viral hepatitis; and
- Enhancing the social support and medical referral services available to state residents infected with viral hepatitis.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Article VII, s. 18 of the Florida Constitution.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Article I, s. 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Article III, Subsection 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

On page 3, line 14 “healthcare” should be corrected to “health care.”

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Amendments:**

None.