

Senate Resolution 753

By: Senators Kirkpatrick of the 32nd, Watson of the 1st, Kirk of the 13th, Hufstetler of the 52nd, Burke of the 11th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Public Health to promote shingles vaccinations and recognizing
2 August 2018, as Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month at the state capitol; and for
3 other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, herpes zoster, commonly referred to as shingles, is a disease caused by the same
5 virus that causes chickenpox and, therefore, any individual who has contracted chickenpox
6 is at risk for shingles; and

7 WHEREAS, approximately 98 percent of adults in the United States have contracted
8 chickenpox; and

9 WHEREAS, nearly one in three people in the United States will contract shingles in their
10 lifetime, corresponding to an estimated one million people annually; and

11 WHEREAS, the risk of shingles increases with age, with nearly half of those affected being
12 over 60 years of age and half of all individuals living to 85 years of age developing the
13 condition; and

14 WHEREAS, shingles is a viral infection that causes a painful rash, along with other potential
15 symptoms, including long-term nerve pain, fever, headache, chills, upset stomach, muscle
16 weakness, skin infection, scarring, and decrease or loss of vision or hearing; and

17 WHEREAS, as many as 20 percent of adults who have contracted shingles develop
18 postherpetic neuralgia, a debilitating complication of shingles that causes severe pain, may
19 interfere with sleep and recreational activities, and is associated with clinical depression; and

20 WHEREAS, vaccines have reduced the burden of widespread and often fatal diseases,
21 enabling individuals to lead longer and healthier lives while reducing health care costs; and

22 WHEREAS, although much attention has been paid to the importance of childhood
23 vaccinations, there is a general lack of awareness regarding adult-recommended vaccines and
24 a common misperception that immunizations are unnecessary for healthy adults; and

25 WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the
26 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that healthy adults 50
27 years of age and older be vaccinated against shingles to prevent shingles and shingles-related
28 complications; and

29 WHEREAS, despite the recommendations of CDC officials and other experts, only 30
30 percent of eligible adults had received the shingles vaccine as of 2015; and

31 WHEREAS, the annual economic burden of shingles in American adults is estimated to be
32 between \$782 million and \$5 billion; and

33 WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) has stated that one of the six causes of excess
34 costs in the United States health care system is missed prevention opportunities; and

35 WHEREAS, millions of American adults go without routine and recommended vaccinations
36 because our medical system is not set up to ensure that adults receive regular preventive
37 health care; and

38 WHEREAS, as the month of August is observed as National Immunization Awareness
39 Month, residents of Georgia should be encouraged to speak with their health care provider
40 to ensure that they have been properly vaccinated against shingles according to current CDC
41 and ACIP recommendations.

42 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
43 urge the Department of Public Health to take appropriate actions to encourage health care
44 practitioners to discuss vaccines for shingles with adult patients and adopt appropriate
45 programs and initiatives to raise public awareness of the importance of adult vaccination;
46 undertake a study to examine the barriers to shingles vaccination uptake, as well as any
47 potential actions that could increase shingles vaccination rates; and create and disseminate
48 educational resources on shingles and shingles vaccination, as well as host regular health and
49 immunization-focused fairs to educate the residents of Georgia on vaccine-preventable
50 diseases, including shingles; and to recognize August 2018, as Shingles Awareness and
51 Improvement Month at the state capitol.

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
53 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the Department of
54 Public Health, the public, and the press.