

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 57

BY SENATOR MILLS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To designate July 2018 as "Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month" in Louisiana to increase public awareness of the importance of adults receiving vaccines against shingles, and to promote outreach and education efforts concerning adult vaccines.

WHEREAS, herpes zoster, commonly known as shingles, is a disease caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox; therefore, any individual who has contracted chicken pox is at risk for shingles, this includes approximately ninety-eight percent of adults in the United States; and

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

WHEREAS, the risk of shingles increases with age, with nearly half of those affected over sixty years of age and fifty percent of people living to age eighty-five will develop shingles; and

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

WHEREAS, as many as twenty percent of adults who contract shingles develop postherpetic neuralgia, a debilitating complication of shingles that causes severe pain that may interfere with sleep and recreational activities, and can be associated with clinical depression; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, despite the recommendations of CDC officials and other experts that all healthy adults be vaccinated against shingles, as of 2015 only thirty percent of eligible adults had received the shingles vaccine; and

WHEREAS, the annual economic burden of shingles in American adults is estimated to be between seven hundred eighty-two million dollars and five billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine has stated that one of the six causes of excess costs in the United States healthcare system is missed prevention opportunities; and

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

WHEREAS, with the designation of July 2018 as Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month, residents of Louisiana are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider to ensure that they have been properly vaccinated against shingles in accordance with current CDC and ACIP recommendations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate July 2018 as "Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month" in Louisiana to increase public awareness of the importance of adults receiving vaccines against shingles, and to promote outreach and education efforts concerning adult vaccines, generally.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Louisiana Department of Health, office of public health.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES