

111TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 531

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Hepatitis Awareness Month  
and World Hepatitis Day.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14, 2010

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. BROWN of Ohio) submitted the following  
resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions

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## RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Hepatitis  
Awareness Month and World Hepatitis Day.

Whereas infection with the hepatitis B and C viruses and the  
incidence of liver disease and cancer caused by the hepa-  
titis B and C viruses have become urgent problems of  
global proportions;

Whereas an estimated 2,000,000,000 people worldwide have  
been infected with the hepatitis B virus, and as many as  
400,000,000 people worldwide live with chronic hepatitis  
B infection;

Whereas an estimated 600,000 people worldwide die each  
year due to a hepatitis B infection;

Whereas an estimated 170,000,000 people worldwide live  
with chronic hepatitis C infection, and an estimated

3,500,000 people are newly infected with hepatitis C each year;

Whereas an estimated 1,700,000 people worldwide die each year due to liver failure or primary liver cancer from chronic hepatitis C infection;

Whereas infection with the hepatitis B and C viruses is a growing health crisis in the United States, and an estimated 5,300,000 people in the United States are chronically infected with the hepatitis B or C virus;

Whereas each year in the United States, an estimated 43,000 people are newly infected with the hepatitis B virus and 17,000 people are newly infected with the hepatitis C virus;

Whereas approximately 65 percent and 75 percent of the people infected with hepatitis B and hepatitis C virus, respectively, are unaware of the infection;

Whereas, because of the asymptomatic nature of the hepatitis B and C viruses, a person who has become chronically infected with 1 of the viruses may not have symptoms for up to 40 years after the initial infection has occurred;

Whereas many people are unaware that they have been infected with the hepatitis B or C virus until years later, when symptoms of liver cancer or liver disease develop;

Whereas, as a result of late diagnosis, approximately 15,000 people die each year from liver disease or liver cancer related to chronic viral hepatitis;

Whereas hepatitis C claims roughly 12,000 lives each year in the United States, and the overall rate of hepatitis C-related deaths in the United States is expected to triple by 2019;

Whereas, in the United States, African-Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Latinos, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, gay and bisexual men, and persons who inject drugs have higher rates of chronic viral hepatitis infection;

Whereas  $\frac{1}{3}$  of HIV-positive people in the United States are co-infected with the hepatitis C virus, and  $\frac{1}{10}$  of HIV-positive people in the United States are co-infected with the hepatitis B virus;

Whereas, although life expectancies for HIV-positive persons have increased with therapy, liver disease, mostly related to hepatitis B or C infections, has become the most common non-AIDS-related cause of death among HIV-positive persons;

Whereas chronic hepatitis B and C infections cost the United States \$16,000,000,000 each year;

Whereas, despite the fact that chronic viral hepatitis is the most common blood-borne infection in the United States, no routine or universal screening is in place for early detection as of the date of the agreement to this resolution;

Whereas, in 2010, the Institute of Medicine issued a report on chronic viral hepatitis, which attributed the lack of knowledge and awareness among the public and health providers of the United States of chronic viral hepatitis, the large health disparities for people infected with chronic viral hepatitis, and the current morbidity and mortality rate for people infected with chronic viral hepatitis, to the lack of dedicated resources for chronic viral hepatitis;

Whereas the first World Hepatitis Day on May 19, 2008, raised awareness about the need for action, compassion,

and understanding about chronic viral hepatitis around the world; and

Whereas the goals of World Hepatitis Day and National Hepatitis Awareness Month are—

(1) to highlight the global nature of the chronic viral hepatitis epidemic;

(2) to recognize the need for a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign designed to help infected patients and the physicians of patients to identify and manage the secondary consequences of the disease; and

(3) to help increase the length and quality of life for individuals diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B or C infections: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) supports the goals and ideals of World Hepatitis Day and National Hepatitis Awareness Month;

3               (2) promotes raising awareness of the risks and  
4               consequences of undiagnosed chronic hepatitis B or  
5               hepatitis C infections; and  
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7               (3) urges a robust governmental and public  
8               health response to protect the health of the more  
9               than 5,000,000 people in the United States and  
10              nearly 600,000,000 people worldwide who suffer  
11              from chronic viral hepatitis.

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