

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 48

Relating to the establishment of a Hepatitis C Task Force

WHEREAS, hepatitis C is a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus which damages liver cells and causes the liver to become swollen and tender, however, hepatitis has many other causes, including some medications, long-term alcohol abuse, and exposure to industrial chemicals; and

WHEREAS, although there is no vaccine to prevent infection with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), research is underway to develop one, but it is difficult to create an effective vaccine because new strains of the original virus can develop that are not affected by a vaccine against the original strain; and

WHEREAS, since all donated blood is screened for hepatitis C, many people are unaware they have hepatitis C until they try to donate blood and are notified by a blood donation center; and

WHEREAS, chronic hepatitis may be treated with medications that fight viral infections, however, the standard treatment of interferon and ribavirin is not an option for every person and only 30%-40% of those who receive antivirals are cured of the infection; and

WHEREAS, the impact of the disease on certain populations, such as intravenous drug users, incarcerated individuals, alcoholics, racial minority groups, gay and lesbian individuals, and HIV/AIDS infected individuals, is still unknown in Missouri:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Senate of the Ninety-second General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby establish a Hepatitis C Task Force to examine the impact of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) on intravenous drug users, incarcerated individuals, alcoholics, racial minority groups, gay and lesbian individuals, and HIV/AIDS infected individuals in Missouri; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall be comprised of the following nine persons appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives:

- (1) Two persons from the Department of Mental Health;
- (2) Two persons from the Department of Health and Senior Services;
- (3) One person from the Department of Corrections;
- (4) Two persons from community organizations providing services to persons with HCV; and
- (5) Two persons living with HCV; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Task Force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall conduct research and evaluate key legislative, programmatic, and socioeconomic issues that are related to the impact of HCV on the

aforementioned populations and make recommendations on ways to improve outreach, prevention, and intervention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall complete its work and submit a report to the General Assembly within one year of its formation, with the advisory House and Senate members of the Task Force providing guidance to the Task Force in its conduct and scope of its work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to the Governor for his approval or rejection pursuant to the Missouri Constitution.

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