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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The month of May is nationally recognized as  
3           Hepatitis Awareness Month, thanks to the "Know More Hepatitis"  
4           campaign initiative undertaken by the United States Centers for  
5           Disease Control's Division of Viral Hepatitis; the campaign is  
6           designed to increase awareness about the hidden epidemic that  
7           affects the lives of so many; and

8           WHEREAS, Hepatitis is a disease that primarily affects the  
9           liver through inflammation; toxins, certain drugs, heavy  
10          alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause  
11          hepatitis; the most common types are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B,  
12          and Hepatitis C, each caused by three different viruses; and

13          WHEREAS, Hepatitis is particularly dangerous because the  
14          symptoms do not manifest upon contraction and in some cases,  
15          not even in more advanced stages; this unfortunately leads to  
16          individuals going unaware of their infection; and

17          WHEREAS, Of the three most prevalent types of hepatitis,  
18          the Hepatitis C virus is the most pernicious; there are  
19          vaccines for Hepatitis A and B, but no such vaccine exists for  
20          Hepatitis C; and

21          WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is primarily transmitted through

1 exposure to infected blood; most cases result from sharing  
2 needles or other paraphernalia used to inject drugs; prior to  
3 1992, when screening for the virus was not common practice,  
4 Hepatitis C was frequently spread through blood transfusions  
5 and organ transplants; there are certain demographics that have  
6 been identified as most at-risk; and

7 WHEREAS, Anyone can get Hepatitis C, but baby boomers are  
8 five times more likely; more than 75% of adults infected are  
9 baby boomers; and

10 WHEREAS, According to the CDC, in 2013, there were an  
11 estimated 29,718 cases of acute Hepatitis C virus infections  
12 reported in the United States; an estimated 3.5 million people  
13 in the United States have chronic Hepatitis C; approximately  
14 75-85% of the people who become infected with Hepatitis C  
15 develop a chronic infection; and

16 WHEREAS, According to the Illinois Department of Public  
17 Health, from 2005 to 2015, there were 80,068 cases of chronic  
18 or resolved Hepatitis C virus infections reported, with 171  
19 other cases reported to be acute forms of the infection; and

20 WHEREAS, Of those infected in Illinois, more than half were  
21 between the ages of 46 and 60; almost 35% were white, nearly  
22 16% African-American, 1.12% Asian, and 46% were unknown; and

1           WHEREAS, During that same period, Cook County reported the  
2           overwhelming majority of cases in Illinois with over 36,000;  
3           the City of Chicago alone accounted for almost 13,000; and

4           WHEREAS, Numerous private and public organizations such as  
5           the American Liver Foundation, the Illinois State Medical  
6           Society, the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Illinois  
7           Department of Public Health, and the CDC have championed  
8           efforts to raise awareness and to find solutions to the  
9           problems resulting from the Hepatitis C virus in Illinois and  
10          across the country; and

11          WHEREAS, With this initiative in mind, and as a means to  
12          help various groups work together to find solutions to many of  
13          the problems resulting from the virus, the Hepatitis C Task  
14          Force was created in Illinois in 2013 with bipartisan support  
15          in both chambers of the General Assembly; the Task Force has  
16          been working diligently to develop strategies and to identify  
17          and address the needs of those infected with Hepatitis C to  
18          improve patient quality of life; and

19          WHEREAS, The commendable efforts of State agencies,  
20          advocacy groups, and concerned citizens to help raise awareness  
21          of Hepatitis C have undoubtedly helped to reduce the spread of  
22          the disease; therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
2 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
3 designate May of 2016 as "Hepatitis C Awareness Month" in the  
4 State of Illinois; and be it further

5           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
6 delivered to the Governor of Illinois, all other constitutional  
7 officers, and all members of the Illinois General Assembly in  
8 order to bring further awareness of the prevalence of the  
9 Hepatitis C virus in our State and around the country.