

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

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

Whereas infection with the hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C
virus and the incidence of liver disease caused by these
viruses have become a global problem of huge propor-
tions;

Whereas it is estimated that 2,000,000,000 people in the
world have been infected with the hepatitis B virus and
that up to 400,000,000 people live with chronic hepatitis
B;

Whereas an estimated 600,000 people die each year as a re-
sult of hepatitis B infection;

Whereas it is estimated that 170,000,000 people in the world have chronic hepatitis C infections and that 3,500,000 people are infected with hepatitis C each year;

Whereas an estimated 1,700,000 people die each year from liver failure or primary liver cancer resulting from chronic hepatitis C infections;

Whereas an estimated 4,600,000 people in the United States are infected with either hepatitis B or hepatitis C, of which 1,400,000 have chronic hepatitis B infections and 3,200,000 have chronic hepatitis C infections;

Whereas an estimated 46,000 new hepatitis B infections and 19,000 new hepatitis C infections occur each year in the United States;

Whereas chronic viral hepatitis claims the lives of roughly 14,000 people in the United States each year;

Whereas hepatitis C causes roughly 9,000 deaths each year in the United States and the overall rate of deaths in the United States related to hepatitis C infections is expected to triple by 2019;

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

Whereas a person who has become chronically infected with the hepatitis B or C virus may not experience symptoms of the virus for up to 40 years after the initial infection has occurred;

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

Whereas 1 out of every 3 HIV-positive people in the United States is also infected with the hepatitis C virus, and 1 out of every 10 HIV-positive people in the United States is also infected with the hepatitis B virus;

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

Whereas, despite the fact that chronic viral hepatitis is the most common blood-borne infection in the United States, there is currently no routine and universal screening system in place for early detection of hepatitis infection;

Whereas the first World Hepatitis Day, held on May 19, 2008, highlighted the need for action, compassion, and understanding about chronic viral hepatitis around the world; and

Whereas the goals of World Hepatitis Day, which will be observed on May 19, 2009, are to highlight the global nature of chronic viral hepatitis epidemics, to recognize the need for a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign designed to help infected patients and their physicians identify and manage the secondary prevention of the disease, and to help increase the length and quality of life for those diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B and C: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes World Hepatitis Day, which will

3 be observed on May 19, 2009;

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

3 (3) supports raising awareness of—

4 (A) the risks and consequences of
5 undiagnosed chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C
6 infections; and

7 (B) the urgent need for a robust response
8 by government and public health officials to
9 protect the health of approximately 6,000,000
10 people in the United States, and nearly
11 600,000,000 people in the world, who suffer
12 from chronic viral hepatitis infections.