

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 19, 2014, as Hepatitis Testing Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Hepatitis Testing Day

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious public health issues that affect the lives of the residents of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is moved to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 19, 2014, as Hepatitis Testing Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Hepatitis Testing Day; and

WHEREAS, May 19, 2014, marks the third National Hepatitis Testing Day, a day for people at risk to be tested, and for health care providers to educate patients about chronic viral hepatitis and testing; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver usually caused by a virus, is a hidden epidemic with significant public health consequences; an estimated 3.5-5.3 million persons are living with viral hepatitis in the United States, and millions more are at risk for infection; and

WHEREAS, Because hepatitis can persist for decades without symptoms, 65-75 percent of infected Americans remain unaware of their infection status and are not receiving care and treatment; and

WHEREAS, There are five types of hepatitis; the most common are Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B and C can progress to a "chronic" or lifelong infection, which can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis B and C are both spread by coming into contact with the blood of an infected person, even in microscopic amounts; in addition, Hepatitis B may be spread through contact with other bodily fluids from an infected person, and an infected mother may pass it to her baby at birth; and

WHEREAS, Individuals at higher risk for Hepatitis B include those born, or whose mother was born, in a region of the world where the disease is common, meaning two percent or more of the population is chronically infected; in most Asian and Pacific Island nations, 8 to 16 percent of the population is chronically infected; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islanders make up five percent of the United States' population but account for over 50 percent of Americans living with Hepatitis B; one in 12 Asian Americans has Hepatitis B, and two out of three of those infected are unaware of their status; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control recommends all people born in Asia and the Pacific Islands get tested for Hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, People born from 1945 through 1965 are five times more likely to be infected with Hepatitis C than other adults, and nearly three out of four individuals with Hepatitis C were born during that time; because of this staggering statistic, the Centers for Disease Control recommends all people born from 1945-1965 get tested for Hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants; and

WHEREAS, In New York City, approximately 146,500 residents may have chronic Hepatitis C; the disease is most prevalent in New York City neighborhoods with high rates of poverty; and

WHEREAS, Early detection of viral hepatitis saves lives, but testing for this disease is not part of routine blood work done during a phys-

ical; all New Yorkers should talk with their doctors about getting tested; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial that days such as National Hepatitis Testing Day are observed in order to continue to raise awareness and halt the spread of hepatitis; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 19, 2014, as Hepatitis Testing Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Hepatitis Testing Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.