

BY: Senator RIVERA

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
May 2019, as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the State
of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious diseases that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2019, as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Hepatitis Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, May 19th has been designated as National Hepatitis Testing Day in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control will use the third annual Hepatitis Testing Day on May 19th as an opportunity to remind health care providers and the public who should be tested for chronic viral hepatitis; and

WHEREAS, The American Liver Foundation (ALF) is dedicated to facilitating, advocating, and promoting education, support and research for the prevention, treatment and cure of liver disease; and

WHEREAS, The word 'hepatitis' means inflammation of the liver; toxins, certain drugs, heavy alcohol use, bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis is a public health threat, known to be caused by many viruses; this disease causes inflammation of the liver; and

WHEREAS, There are three main types of viral hepatitis, A, B, and C; their effects range from not usually serious (A) to serious (C); in addition, rarer forms of hepatitis include hepatitis D, E, and autoimmune hepatitis; and

WHEREAS, Up to 4.7 million Americans have chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C infection; approximately 75% of the infected population are unaware they are even infected; and

WHEREAS, A vaccine is available for hepatitis A (HAV); as many as 1.2 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B (HBV) which is spread through blood and body fluids; and if left untreated, hepatitis C (HCV) can be life threatening; and

WHEREAS, There is a lot of stigma associated with hepatitis B; the hepatitis virus attacks the liver causing damage which can result in liver cancer; hepatitis B accounts for about 80% of liver cancer cases;

and

WHEREAS, Chronic viral hepatitis due to hepatitis C has been a disease that has little or no public awareness due to its nature as being largely asymptomatic until irreversible liver damage has occurred; and

WHEREAS, Currently, hepatitis C infects nearly four million Americans, including over 200,000 New Yorkers, and there are about 25,000 new cases each year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of hepatitis C reached a high in 2014, with 19,659 deaths, and costs approximately \$7.5 million per 100,000 people; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is largely not reported and the public is uninformed about the virus; and

WHEREAS, In the absence of a vaccine for hepatitis C, emphasis must be placed on other means of disease prevention, including education of health care workers, emergency services workers, veterans and the general public; and

WHEREAS, Hepatitis C has been characterized by the World Health Organization as a disease of primary concern to humanity; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase activity at the State, local and national levels to support the patients as well as their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2019, as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the State of New York, and to urge the citizens of this great Empire State to learn about the causes, symptoms, diagnoses and treatments for hepatitis; 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.