

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

May 12, 2009

World Hepatitis Awareness Day is May 19th, an annual global observance to raise public awareness about hepatitis (A, B, and C) and its impact on the lives of people around the world. An estimated 3.2 million people in the United States have chronic hepatitis C. Chronic hepatitis B and C cause significant suffering from liver disease, liver cancer, cirrhosis, liver failure and death. An estimated 134,000 people are chronically infected with hepatitis C in Los Angeles County and many who are infected with chronic hepatitis B and C are unaware of their status.

Expanded hepatitis B and C testing for high-risk adults is necessary to detect chronic disease and to prevent further liver damage. Although vaccines are only available to prevent hepatitis A and B, more effective and targeted public awareness programs are essential in reducing disease transmission and preventing viral hepatitis A, B, and C. Expanded testing and vaccination for hepatitis B are especially important among Asian and Pacific Islanders (APIs). Nearly 1 in 10 APIs in the United States are chronically infected with hepatitis B, one-third or more are unaware of their status, and approximately 25% will die of hepatitis B-related liver diseases. Specific prevention strategies targeting high-risk populations for hepatitis C need enhancement, especially among men who have sex with men and those who use injection drugs.

(MORE)

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

ANTONOVICH _____

KNABE _____

Greater viral hepatitis public awareness, enhanced surveillance for chronic hepatitis B and C, increased access to hepatitis A and B vaccinations, and expanded hepatitis B and C testing can prevent disease transmission, unnecessary suffering, and premature deaths in Los Angeles County,

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim May 19, 2009, as World Hepatitis Awareness Day throughout Los Angeles County.

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RE:mw