

The House Committee on Health and Ecology offers the following substitute
to HR 1536:

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging increased education, awareness, and data gathering relevant to the critical issue of
2 Hepatitis C; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C, a chronic liver disease, is a major public health problem that is the
4 leading cause of liver transplantation and results in 10,000 deaths annually from cirrhosis,
5 liver cancer, and liver failure and affects 4 million Americans and 100,000 Georgians each
6 year with the death rate for African Americans from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
7 exceeding the national average by approximately 10 percent; and

8 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C currently accounts for approximately \$600 million in medical
9 expenses and work loss, excluding transplantation, with rural populations disproportionately
10 affected by the disease, and Georgia has 117 counties which are medically underserved; and

11 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C, like Hepatitis A and B, knows no social or economic boundaries
12 with viral hepatitis accounting for considerable morbidity and mortality and a substantial cost
13 burden to society, mainly through medical care and loss of work, as an estimated one-third
14 of Americans evidence a past infection of Hepatitis A and 1.25 million Americans are
15 infected with Hepatitis B with 20 to 30 percent of those contracting the disease at birth; and

16 WHEREAS, early detection is crucial in the treatment and containment of viral hepatitis, and
17 detection is possible through blood screenings and, with early detection, treatment is
18 effective in many cases; and

19 WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly is committed to preserving and protecting the
20 health of the citizens of Georgia.

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
22 the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources is urged to place
23 greater emphasis on the public health implications of Hepatitis C and initiate efforts to

1 inform this body about programs and policies designed to enhance education, awareness,
2 detection, and prevention of this disease, and, additionally, the study of Hepatitis A and B
3 is urged for a greater understanding of public health implications.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Community Health is urged to assess
5 the status of Hepatitis C among enrollees of Medicaid, PeachCare, the State Health Benefit
6 Plan, and the Board of Regents Plan.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Corrections is urged to coordinate
8 efforts to address the needs of the prison population regarding screening and treatment for
9 Hepatitis C.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings of the above efforts be reported in the form
11 of recommendations to the Health and Ecology Committee of the House of Representatives
12 ad hoc committee on Hepatitis C.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
14 and directed to distribute copies of this resolution to interested and affected parties as may
15 be appropriate.