

House Resolution 1167

By: Representatives Drenner of the 85th, Henson of the 86th, Trammell of the 132nd, Parsons of the 44th, Cooper of the 43rd, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing August as Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, herpes zoster (shingles) is a disease caused by the same virus (zoster) that
4 causes chicken pox; therefore, any individual who has contracted chicken pox is at risk for
5 shingles (approximately 98 percent of adults in the United States); and

6 WHEREAS, nearly one in three people in the United States will contract shingles in their
7 lifetime, corresponding to an estimated one million people annually; and

8 WHEREAS, the risk of shingles increases with age; nearly half of those affected are over 60
9 years old and half of the people living until 85 years of age will develop shingles; and

10 WHEREAS, shingles is a viral infection that causes a painful rash that can be severe along
11 with other symptoms including long-term nerve pain, fever, headache, chills, upset stomach,
12 muscle weakness, skin infection, scarring, and decrease or loss of vision or hearing; and

13 WHEREAS, as much as 20 percent of adults who have contracted shingles will develop
14 postherpetic neuralgia, a debilitating complication of shingles that causes severe pain, may
15 interfere with sleep and recreational activities, and may be associated with clinical
16 depression; and

17 WHEREAS, vaccines have reduced the burden of widespread and often fatal diseases,
18 enabling individuals to lead longer and healthier lives while reducing health care costs; and

19 WHEREAS, although much attention has been paid to the importance of childhood
20 vaccinations, there is a general lack of awareness of adult-recommended vaccines and a
21 misperception that immunizations are unnecessary for healthy adults; and

22 WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the
23 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that healthy adults 50
24 years and older be vaccinated against shingles to prevent shingles and shingles-related
25 complications; and

26 WHEREAS, despite the recommendations of CDC officials and other experts that all healthy
27 adults be vaccinated against shingles, as of 2015 only 30 percent of eligible adults had
28 received the shingles vaccine; and

29 WHEREAS, the annual economic burden of shingles in American adults is estimated to be
30 between \$782 million and \$5 billion; and

31 WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine has stated that one of the six causes of excess costs in
32 the United States health care system is missed prevention opportunities; and

33 WHEREAS, millions of American adults go without routine and recommended vaccinations
34 because our medical system is not set up to ensure that adults receive regular preventive
35 health care; and

36 WHEREAS, as the month of August is observed as National Immunization Awareness
37 Month, residents of Georgia should be encouraged to speak with their health care provider
38 to ensure that they have been properly vaccinated against shingles according to current CDC
39 and ACIP recommendations.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
41 the members of this body:

- 42 1. Recognize August as Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month in Georgia to
43 increase public awareness of the importance of adults receiving vaccines against shingles
44 and to promote outreach and education efforts concerning adult vaccination;
- 45 2. Encourage the Georgia Department of Public Health to take appropriate action to
46 promote Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month, including urging health care
47 practitioners to discuss vaccines for shingles with adult patients and adopting appropriate
48 programs and initiatives to raise public awareness of the importance of adult vaccination;
- 49 3. Encourage the Georgia Department of Public Health to undertake a study to examine the
50 barriers to shingles vaccination uptake, as well as any potential actions that could increase
51 shingles vaccination rates; and

52 4. Encourage the Georgia Department of Public Health to create and disseminate
53 educational resources on shingles and shingles vaccination, as well as to host regular health
54 and immunization focused fairs to educate the residents of Georgia on vaccine-preventable
55 diseases, including shingles.

56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
57 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the
58 Georgia Department of Public Health.