
By: **Delegate D. Davis**
Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2000
Assigned to: Environmental Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Hepatitis C Education, Prevention, and Screening Act**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a statewide public information program on hepatitis
4 C education, prevention, and screening; providing for the development and
5 implementation of a public education and outreach program; providing for a
6 program to educate health care providers; providing for access to hepatitis C
7 information and patient referral services; providing for a certain program in
8 cooperation with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services;
9 providing for the investigation and development of reports for certain cases of
10 hepatitis C; providing for the evaluation and improvement of hepatitis C
11 support services in the community; requiring the Secretary of Health and
12 Mental Hygiene to submit certain reports to the Governor and the General
13 Assembly on its findings, recommendations, and activities; and generally
14 relating to hepatitis C.

15 BY adding to
16 Article - Health - General
17 Section 18-801 through 18-803 to be under the new subtitle "Subtitle 8.
18 Hepatitis C Education, Prevention, and Screening Act"
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (1994 Replacement Volume and 1999 Supplement)

21 Preamble

22 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is a silent killer largely asymptomatic until
23 irreversible liver damage occurs;

24 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is characterized by the World Health Organization as
25 a disease of primary concern to humanity;

26 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C currently infects approximately 4.5 million Americans
27 and there are approximately 30,000 new infections each year in the United States;

1 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control estimates that approximately
2 12,000 individuals die each year from the consequences of hepatitis C and this
3 number is expected to rise;

4 WHEREAS, Approximately 90,000 citizens of Maryland are infected with
5 hepatitis C;

6 WHEREAS, Since the disease is considered a serious public health threat, the
7 United States Department of Health and Human Services has launched a
8 comprehensive plan to address this significant health problem, beginning with the
9 identification and notification of hundreds of thousands of individuals who have been
10 exposed to hepatitis C through blood transfusions; and

11 WHEREAS, In the absence of a vaccine, emphasis must be placed on other
12 means of disease awareness and prevention, including education of police officers,
13 firefighters, health care providers, and the general public; now, therefore,

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
15 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article - Health - General**

17 **SUBTITLE 8. HEPATITIS C EDUCATION, PREVENTION, AND SCREENING ACT.**

18 18-801.

19 THE SECRETARY SHALL ESTABLISH AND PROMOTE A STATEWIDE PUBLIC
20 INFORMATION PROGRAM ON HEPATITIS C EDUCATION, PREVENTION, AND
21 SCREENING.

22 18-802.

23 THE SECRETARY SHALL:

24 (1) DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH
25 PROGRAM TO:

26 (I) RAISE AWARENESS OF HEPATITIS C AIMED AT HIGH-RISK
27 POPULATIONS, PHYSICIANS' OFFICES, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, HEALTH CARE
28 FACILITIES, PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL, AND CORRECTIONS OFFICERS; AND

29 (II) PROVIDE INFORMATION ON RISK FACTORS, THE VALUE OF
30 EARLY DETECTION, AND THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C;

31 (2) DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO EDUCATE HEALTH CARE
32 PROVIDERS IN:

33 (I) THE EPIDEMIOLOGY, NATURAL HISTORY, DETECTION, AND
34 TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C; AND

1 (II) THE IMPLICATIONS BETWEEN HEPATITIS C AND THE
2 TREATMENT OF ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) TREATMENT;

3 (3) PROVIDE ACCESS TO CLEAR, COMPLETE, AND ACCURATE HEPATITIS
4 C INFORMATION AND PATIENT REFERRAL SERVICES;

5 (4) DEVELOP A PROGRAM IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
6 CORRECTIONS TO:

7 (I) IDENTIFY INMATES INFECTED WITH HEPATITIS C LIKELY TO
8 BE RELEASED FROM CUSTODY WITHIN 2 YEARS; AND

9 (II) PROVIDE COUNSELING AND TREATMENT OPTIONS TO REDUCE
10 THE COMMUNITY OF INMATES INFECTED WITH HEPATITIS C;

11 (5) (I) COLLECT AND ANALYZE REPORTS OF CHRONIC AND ACUTE
12 CASES OF HEPATITIS C;

13 (II) INVESTIGATE ALL REPORTED CASES OF HEPATITIS C AND
14 MAINTAIN RECORDS OF POSSIBLE SOURCES OF TRANSMISSION;

15 (III) PREPARE A STATISTICAL REPORT ON THE NUMBERS AND
16 TYPES OF REPORTED HEPATITIS C CASES; AND

17 (IV) REPORT CASES TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND
18 PREVENTION; AND

19 (6) EVALUATE EXISTING HEPATITIS C SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE
20 COMMUNITY AND ASSESS THE NEED FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND
21 ACCESSIBILITY OF THESE SERVICES.

22 18-803.

23 ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR, THE SECRETARY SHALL ISSUE A
24 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT
25 ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE PROGRAM FINDINGS,
26 RECOMMENDATIONS, AND ACTIVITIES.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
28 October 1, 2000.