

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

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HOUSE BILL 1264

Short Title: Study Committee on Hepatitis C.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Wright.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

April 12, 2001

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION TO
3 STUDY THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT OF HEPATITIS C IN NORTH
4 CAROLINA.

5 Whereas, Hepatitis C is a major public health issue including 36,000 new
6 infections in the United States affecting four million Americans and 100,000 North
7 Carolinians; and

8 Whereas, Hepatitis C is a chronic liver disease with few recognizable
9 symptoms that in many cases lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure; is the
10 leading cause of liver transplantation; and accounts for between 8,000 and 10,000
11 deaths annually from chronic liver disease; and

12 Whereas, Hepatitis C accounts for an estimated \$600,000,000 in medical
13 expenses and work loss, excluding transplantation; and

14 Whereas, Hepatitis C currently accounts for 10,000 deaths annually in this
15 country and is expected to increase to 38,000 deaths annually by the end of this decade;
16 and

17 Whereas, the highest risk groups for Hepatitis C include hemodialysis
18 patients, injecting drug users, health care workers, veterans, and infants born to infected
19 women; and

20 Whereas, Hepatitis C is a major cause of disability and hospitalization; and

21 Whereas, Hepatitis C affects rural populations disproportionately; and

22 Whereas, detection is possible through blood screenings and treatment is
23 effective in 10 to 40% of infected persons; and

24 Whereas, the General Assembly is concerned with preserving the health of
25 the citizens of this State; Now, therefore,

26 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

27 **SECTION 1.** The Legislative Research Commission may study the public
28 health impact of Hepatitis C in North Carolina and the need for programs or policies to

1 enhance education, awareness, detection, and prevention of the disease in the general
2 population. The Commission may make a progress report to the 2002 Regular Session
3 of the 2001 General Assembly upon its convening, and shall make a final report to the
4 2003 General Assembly upon its convening. The progress and final reports may include
5 recommended legislation.

6 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.