

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION directing the Cabinet for Health and Family
2 Services to examine Kentucky's recent response to the hepatitis A outbreak and make
3 recommendations to make future responses to outbreaks more effective.

4 WHEREAS, hepatitis A is an infectious liver disease typically resulting in mild
5 illness but sometimes causing nausea, jaundice, fever, dizziness, and possibly liver
6 failure; and

7 WHEREAS, hepatitis A is particularly dangerous for persons with existing medical
8 conditions; and

9 WHEREAS, since 1995, the hepatitis A vaccine has led to fewer outbreaks in the
10 United States; and

11 WHEREAS, since the late 1990s, Kentucky experienced only about 20 cases of
12 hepatitis A per year; and

13 WHEREAS, beginning in the fall of 2017, approximately 5 new cases were
14 appearing in Kentucky each week; and

15 WHEREAS, the outbreak started in Louisville, moved to Boyd, Greenup, and
16 Carter Counties, and then spread throughout the state; and

17 WHEREAS, the Kentucky outbreak of hepatitis A grew to be the largest in the
18 United States with more than 4,100 known cases of illness, 2,000 people hospitalized,
19 and 43 people dying; and

20 WHEREAS, initial focus by the Department for Public Health was on the
21 vaccination of individuals at highest risk of transmission intravenous -- substance users
22 and homeless persons -- hepatitis A began to spread beyond these high risk populations;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, despite making more vaccine available across the state, some local
25 health departments reported shortages of hepatitis A vaccine and shortages of nurses to
26 administer the vaccine; and

27 WHEREAS, Louisville was able to contain its outbreak in half of the time and with

1 one-twentieth of the resources of cities with similar size outbreaks of hepatitis A; and

2 WHEREAS, despite an incredibly tight budget, the United States Centers for
3 Disease Control and Prevention declared that Louisville's response as the gold standard
4 for the nation; and

5 WHEREAS, Kentucky could also learn from the responses of other states to similar
6 hepatitis A outbreaks; and

7 WHEREAS, Kentucky could improve its response to future outbreaks by examining
8 whether action should have been taken more quickly, more resources should have been
9 leveraged to provide vaccine, access to the vaccine should have been more adequately
10 distributed geographically, and whether a public health emergency should have been
11 declared;

12 NOW, THEREFORE,

13 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*
14 *Kentucky, the House of Representatives concurring therein:*

15 ➔Section 1. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is directed to examine
16 Kentucky's recent response to the hepatitis A outbreak, consult with directors of
17 Departments of Public Health and Wellness, and make recommendations to the General
18 Assembly to ensure that future responses to outbreaks are more effective. The General
19 Assembly urges the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to improve its plans to
20 respond to future outbreaks of disease by planning to take early and effective action,
21 utilize available resources efficiently, and provide adequate geographical distribution of
22 vaccine to avoid the unnecessary spread of illness and prevent the deaths of Kentuckians.