

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

122nd General Assembly of Ohio

BILL: S.B. 183 DATE: November 18, 1997

STATUS: As Introduced SPONSOR: Sen. Drake

LOCAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIRED: No — Permissive

CONTENTS: Designates the month of October as “Ohio Hepatitis C Awareness Month” in order to increase public awareness of Hepatitis C as an emerging health concern

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state. Typically the Department of Health (DOH) does not fund statewide educational programs or prevention campaigns unless required by law. The agency publicizes current health concerns and informs the public of emerging health concerns by issuing press releases.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 1998	FY 1999	FUTURE YEARS
Counties – County Boards of Health			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase
Municipalities – City Boards of Health			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase	Potential minimal increase

- As a result of this permissive legislation, county and city health departments may initiate Hepatitis C awareness and prevention programs at their discretion. However, since the statewide incidence of Hepatitis C is quite low, these local agencies would not likely expend much, if any, money for this purpose.



Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill designates the month of October as “Hepatitis C Awareness Month” in order to recognize the infectious disease as an emerging health concern. This permissive legislation does not require the Department of Health (DOH) or any of the 88 county and 158 local boards of health to implement Hepatitis C awareness or prevention programs. The state agency would fund a statewide awareness and prevention campaign only if Hepatitis C posed a serious threat to public health. According to staff at three health departments around the state, they would not presently devote funds to large-scale Hepatitis C awareness or prevention campaigns. Their efforts to publicize the disease as an emerging health concern would be limited to submitting packets of information and press releases to local media.

Currently the only means of detection for Hepatitis C is an antibody test, known as Anti-HCV. The National Center for Infectious Diseases (NCID), a branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), estimates that 35,000 to 180,000 people are infected with Hepatitis C every year in the United States. Overall, the NCID estimates that 3.9 million Americans are chronically infected with Hepatitis C. Only a fraction of these cases has been diagnosed through medical screening for the Hepatitis C antibody.

DOH officials estimate that 1,500 to 2,000 Ohioans carry the Hepatitis C virus. Few cases are actually reported since a carrier may never show symptoms of the disease and may never be tested. The table below displays the incidence of newly diagnosed, or acute, Hepatitis C infections in Calendar Years 1996 and 1997 year-to-date for selected Ohio counties.

Table 1. Diagnosed Cases of Acute Hepatitis C Infection Reported in Selected Counties, 1996 and 1997 Year-to-Date.

	1996	1997
County	Frequency	Frequency
Ashtabula	1	1
Athens	1	1
Belmont	1	1
Cuyahoga	2	1
Franklin	6	6
Portage	1	2
Trumbull	1	1
Total	13	13

Source: Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control.

Notice that the table reflects newly diagnosed infections in seven counties only. According to a DOH official, the data reported from these counties are the most reliable on hand. Most of the other data collected statewide is incomplete and unusable for statistical and tracking purposes. The DOH’s 1995 Annual Summary of Infectious Diseases, which reports the incidence of officially-notifiable diseases, indicates that newly reported cases of Hepatitis C have declined in successive years from a high of 169 cases in 1991 to 15 cases in 1995.

