



Proclamation

Liver disease has become a serious public health issue in our nation, as it currently affects more than 30 million Americans. Diseases such as Hepatitis are often referred to as “silent diseases” because liver damage can gradually occur over many years before being discovered, which often happens once the damage is irreparable.

Preventing and combating the spread of liver disease is important to the State of Hawai‘i. It is estimated that nearly 50,000 of our citizens are currently affected by Hepatitis B, and more than 23,000 are living with Hepatitis C. Statistically, Americans of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry have a high prevalence of Hepatitis B nationwide, and more than half of our state’s population is comprised of individuals from these backgrounds. Chronic Hepatitis B and C can eventually lead to liver cancer, and Hawai‘i possesses the highest rate of liver cancer in the nation.

These diseases are largely spread through body fluid contact with an infected person, similar to HIV/AIDS. Hepatitis B can also be passed from a mother to her child during birth. Both Hepatitis B and C can be detected through simple blood tests.

Each May, communities across the nation observe *National Hepatitis Awareness Month* in order to inform the public about the dangers of these liver diseases. Early diagnosis is critical for those with Hepatitis, so accurate and timely information about liver disease is important to heighten awareness, prevent infection and transmission and allow those infected to seek proper medical care.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and **I, JAMES R. “DUKE” AIONA, JR.**, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, do hereby proclaim **May 2007** as

HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH

in Hawai‘i, and encourage our citizens to become aware of liver disease and take steps to protect their health.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai‘i, this fourth day of May 2007.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai‘i

James R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai‘i