

FEB 3 2005
STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE FILE 196
BY RANTS

Passed House, Date _____ Passed Senate, Date _____
Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____
Approved _____

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing for the establishment of a hepatitis C awareness
2 program.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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HF 196

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 135.20 HEPATITIS C AWARENESS
2 PROGRAM -- VETERANS -- VACCINATIONS.

3 1. The department shall establish and administer a
4 hepatitis C awareness program. The goal of the program shall
5 be to distribute information to veterans regarding the higher
6 incidence of hepatitis C exposure and infection among
7 veterans, the dangers presented by the disease, and contacts
8 for additional information and referrals. For purposes of
9 this section, "veteran" means an individual meeting the
10 definition contained in section 35.1.

11 2. The information to be distributed shall be determined
12 by the department by rule, in consultation with the commission
13 of veterans affairs. The information shall, at a minimum,
14 contain statements indicating that:

15 a. The federal department of veterans affairs estimates a
16 hepatitis C infection rate in veterans more than three times
17 higher than for the general population.

18 b. The infection rate for Vietnam veterans is estimated to
19 be even higher than for other veterans groups.

20 c. The disease is caused by a bloodborne virus readily
21 transmitted during combat and combat-related emergency medical
22 treatment.

23 d. Many veterans currently carrying the virus were
24 infected prior to the development of medical screening tests.

25 e. The hepatitis C virus often resolves into a chronic
26 infection without symptoms for ten to thirty years before
27 signs of resultant liver disease appear.

28 f. This unusually long latency period makes it difficult
29 to connect current symptoms with an infection that may have
30 actually been contracted during military service decades ago.

31 The information shall also present treatment options and
32 shall specify a procedure to be followed for veterans desiring
33 a medical consultation for screening and treatment purposes.
34 The department shall cooperate with the state commission of
35 veterans affairs regarding distribution of the information to

1 the veterans home, the county commissions of veteran affairs,
2 veterans hospitals, and other appropriate points of
3 distribution.

4 Sec. 2. REPORT. The department shall submit a report to
5 the members of the general assembly by January 1, 2007,
6 regarding the development and distribution of the information
7 required by this Act and any resulting impact.

8 EXPLANATION

9 This bill provides for the establishment of a hepatitis C
10 awareness program by the Iowa department of public health.
11 The bill provides that the goal of the program shall be to
12 distribute information to veterans regarding the higher
13 incidence of hepatitis C exposure and infection among
14 veterans, the dangers presented by the disease, and contacts
15 for additional information and referrals.

16 The bill provides that the information to be distributed
17 shall be determined by the department by rule, in consultation
18 with the state commission of veterans affairs. The bill
19 provides that information shall at a minimum contain
20 statements indicating that estimates place hepatitis C
21 infection rates in veterans more than three times higher than
22 for the general population and higher still for Vietnam
23 veterans, that the disease is readily transmitted during
24 combat and combat-related emergency medical treatment, that
25 many veterans were infected prior to the development of
26 medical screening tests, that the virus often resolves into a
27 chronic infection without symptoms for 10 to 30 years before
28 signs of resultant liver disease appear, and that this can
29 make it difficult to connect current symptoms with an
30 infection that may have actually been contracted during
31 military service decades ago. The bill provides that the
32 information shall also present treatment options and shall
33 specify a procedure to be followed for veterans desiring a
34 medical consultation for screening and treatment purposes.

35 The bill provides that the department shall cooperate with

1 the state commission of veterans affairs the distribution of
2 the information to the veterans home, the county commissions
3 on veteran affairs, veterans hospitals, and other distribution
4 points.

5 The bill provides that the department shall submit a report
6 to the members of the general assembly by January 1, 2007,
7 regarding the distribution and impact of the information.

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