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SCR-74 HIV viral load suppression. (2017-2018)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 74

CHAPTER 29

Relative to HIV viral load suppression.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 10, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 74, Wiener. HIV viral load suppression.

This measure would recognize the importance that viral load suppression plays in improving health outcomes and reducing HIV transmission in the state, and would encourage stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS community, and all Californians, to carefully examine the Office of AIDS findings and conclusions relating to a specified program on HIV when the office completes its findings and generates data related to that program.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, More than 1.2 million people living in the United States are infected with HIV, and 1 in 8 is unaware of the infection; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, five states, including California, made up almost one-half of all new HIV diagnoses in the United States; and

WHEREAS, California has made significant progress through its "Laying a Foundation for Getting to Zero, California's Integrated HIV Surveillance, Prevention and Care Plan" — committed to zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, and zero stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV; and

WHEREAS, Significant advances in antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV have made it possible to reduce transmission rates, avoid over 862,000 premature deaths, gain over 27 million life-years, and gain \$615 billion in economic value over the cost of HIV treatment in the United States alone; and

WHEREAS, A 2011 clinical study from the National Institutes of Health found that treating HIV-positive people with ART reduces the risk of transmitting the virus to HIV-negative sexual partners by 96 percent from the start of treatment; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 126,241 people were diagnosed and living with HIV in California in 2014; however, only 52 percent (71,683 persons) achieved viral suppression, meaning that antiretroviral therapy has reduced a person's viral load to an undetectable level; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act has played a critical role in decreasing the number of uninsured, particularly for people living with HIV. The state's Medi-Cal program now covers about one-third of all Californians (roughly 13 million total) after Medicaid expansion added approximately 3.5 million Californians to the program since January 2014; and

WHEREAS, Viral load suppression saves state Medicaid programs an estimated \$1 million per treated patient by preventing transmissions; and

WHEREAS, In its Clinical Quality Management Plan, HIV Care Program, AIDS Drug Assistance Program, the Office of AIDS report released May 2015, the State Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS expressed a vision that “All people living with HIV/AIDS in California are virally suppressed and in care,” and declared that “viral load suppression not only improves individual health, but it also reduces HIV transmission on a population level”; and

WHEREAS, The HIV Health Improvement Affinity Group (HHIAG) — a joint initiative between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and Services Administration — offers federal support for state-level efforts to improve rates of sustained viral load suppression among Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program enrollees who are living with HIV; and

WHEREAS, States, including California, that participate in the HHIAG benefit from direct technical assistance to develop and implement a viral load suppression improvement plan and leverage best practices to improve state viral load suppression rates; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana, also an HHIAG participant, successfully implemented an HIV surveillance data sharing agreement — including viral load suppression — between the state’s Medicaid program and Department of Public Health with the goal of improving health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, As a result of HHIAG, the Office of AIDS has committed to sharing its findings and data with the State Department of Health Care Services in order to assess and increase viral load suppression rates among Medicaid recipients living with HIV; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the critical importance that viral load suppression plays in improving health outcomes and reducing HIV transmission on a population level in this state; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS community, and all Californians, to carefully examine the Office of AIDS findings and conclusions relating to the HHIAG when the office completes its findings and generates any related data; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.