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**SCR-115 Drug abuse awareness.** (2021-2022)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 115**

**CHAPTER 152**

Relative to drug abuse.

[ Filed with Secretary of State August 30, 2022. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 115, Bates. Drug abuse awareness.

This measure would designate the month of September 2022 as Opioid, Heroin, Fentanyl, and Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month, as specified.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Opioids are drugs that act on the nervous system to conceal pain; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, more than 14,800,000 opioid prescriptions were written in California; and

WHEREAS, From 1999 to 2020, inclusive, over 500,000 people died from overdoses related to opioids in the United States; and

WHEREAS, In the 12-month period ending in April 2021, overdose deaths from opioids increased to 75,673 in the United States, up from 56,064 the year before; and

WHEREAS, Drug overdoses kill more people in one year than do the number of motor vehicle fatalities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The number of deaths from fentanyl overdoses jumped by more than 2,100% in California in five years; and

WHEREAS, Overdoses of synthetic opioids killed nearly 4,000 residents in California in 2020, with 3,946 attributed to fentanyl, according to the most recent estimate from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State Department of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, Fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more powerful than morphine, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, Aggregate annual costs for prescription opioid overdose, abuse, and dependence were estimated at \$1.02 trillion nationally in 2017, up from \$78.5 billion in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Abuse of opioid pain relievers is the strongest risk factor for heroin abuse; and

WHEREAS, Seventy-five percent of new heroin users were first addicted to a legally prescribed prescription opioid; and

WHEREAS, Many teens and young adults first use opioids when they are prescribed to them following an injury or routine procedure like the removal of wisdom teeth; and

WHEREAS, Each day in the United States, 580 people initiate heroin use; and

WHEREAS, Opioid use and misuse can create brain changes that lead to addiction; and

WHEREAS, Most people who are addicted to opioids cannot taper off, or use less of the drug over time, without help; and

WHEREAS, The long-term damage to individuals and families is highly detrimental; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges for people with substance use disorders and those in recovery; and

WHEREAS, The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends nonopioid pharmacologic therapy, and if opioids are used, they should be combined with nonopioid therapy, as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the federal Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee developed the National Pain Strategy, noting that effective pain care must emphasize shared decisionmaking, informed pain assessment, and integrated, multimodal, and interdisciplinary treatment approaches that balance effectiveness with safety; and

WHEREAS, Each year, a week in September is designated as national Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates the month of September 2022 as Opioid, Heroin, Fentanyl, and Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month and encourages residents to show support for opioid and prescription drug awareness; and be it further

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