**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE AUGUST 13 THROUGH 19, 2018, AS “IMMUNIZATION WEEK” IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO SEEK TO INCREASE THE POPULATION’S AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING AGE‑APPROPRIATE VACCINATIONS.

Whereas, in coordination with National Immunization Awareness Month, South Carolina will celebrate “Immunization Week” from August 13 through 19, 2018, with the aim of educating and creating awareness in all South Carolinians of the importance of immunizations, in addition to encouraging all Palmetto State citizens to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from vaccine‑preventable diseases; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Immunization Coalition, supported by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the South Carolina Alliance of Health Plans Foundation, the Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence, Select Health of South Carolina, Walgreens, and other partners, has the goal of increasing immunization rates for all ages in this glorious State through awareness, education, and increased access, thereby, reducing the risk of illness and death in diseases that are avoidable through vaccines; and

Whereas, South Carolina has lower than national average rates of vaccinations in young children, adolescents, and adults. However, as a result of strong school vaccination requirements, vaccination rates for kindergartners remain high in the State; and

Whereas, in the 2016‑2017 flu season, there were a total of ninety‑four influenza associated deaths in the State, and two thousand four hundred ninety reported hospitalizations. Despite the flu vaccine having widespread availability, only about forty‑seven percent of South Carolinians aged six months and older were immunized. Among the State’s Medicare population, only fifty‑six percent received the flu vaccine in the aforementioned flu season; and

Whereas, shingles, another highly preventable disease, has low rates of vaccinations with only approximately twenty‑nine percent of adults aged sixty and older in South Carolina receiving the vaccine as of 2015. With about one million cases of shingles diagnosed in the United States every year, it is recommended that adults fifty years and older receive shingles vaccinations to prevent a painful, blistering rash that can cause long‑lasting, hard‑to‑treat pain; and

Whereas, pertussis, or whopping cough, continues to be reported in South Carolina. Pertussis is known for uncontrollable coughing which often makes it hard to breathe. Pertussis can affect people of all ages, but can be very serious, even requiring hospitalization, for babies less than one‑year‑old. The Tdap vaccine is recommended for all adolescents and adults, but in South Carolina, vaccination rates remain low with less than thirty‑one percent of adults over the age of eighteen receiving the vaccine. This vaccination is especially important for pregnant women and any adults who have contact with infants; and

Whereas, during this week of increased awareness, the members of the General Assembly urge the citizens of South Carolina who have not already received recommended vaccinations to begin the steps necessary to protect themselves and their families. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, declare August 13 through 19, 2018, as “Immunization Week” in South Carolina and seek to increase the population’s awareness of the importance of receiving age‑appropriate vaccinations.

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