**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE AUGUST 14-21, 2017, AS “IMMUNIZATION WEEK” IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO SEEK TO INCREASE THE POPULATION’S AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING VACCINATIONS.

Whereas, in coordination with National Immunization Awareness Month, South Carolina will celebrate Immunization Week from August 14-21, 2017, 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, Walgreens, Select Health of South Carolina, and the Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence, 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 kindergarteners remain high in the State; and

Whereas, in the 2015-2016 flu season, there were a total of forty‑seven influenza associated deaths in the State and one thousand eight hundred eighty hospitalizations. Despite the flu vaccine having widespread availability, only about forty‑seven percent of South Carolinians six months and older were immunized. Fifteen counties had extremely low rates for immunizations in Medicare populations; and

Whereas, shingles, another highly‑preventable disease, has low rates of vaccinations, with only approximately twenty‑nine percent of adults aged sixty and older receiving the vaccination. With about one million cases of shingles diagnosed in the United States every year and about half of those cases being in people sixty years and older, it is imperative that adults take advantage of the availability of this vaccine to prevent a painful and blistering rash that can cause long‑lasting, hard‑to‑treat pain; and

Whereas, furthermore, there continues to be pertussis outbreaks in South Carolina. Pertussis causes coughing fits that can last up to ten weeks or more and can cause serious illness in babies, children, teens, and adults, with approximately half of infected babies less than one year old requiring hospitalization. The Tdap vaccine prevents pertussis, but in South Carolina, vaccination rates remain low with less than twenty‑eight percent of adults over the age of eighteen receiving the vaccine. This vaccination is important for all adults, but especially 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 taken advantage of these life‑saving 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 General Assembly, by this resolution, declare August 14-21, 2017, as “Immunization Week” in South Carolina and seek to increase the population’s awareness of the importance of receiving vaccinations.

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