



individuals during the year 2002 alone; and

Whereas, According to studies conducted by the NIH and the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), chronic Hepatitis C infections now are the leading cause of cirrhosis of the liver, end-stage liver disease and liver cancer, and are the most common cause of liver transplants; and

Whereas, OASAS and the NIH have projected a four-fold increase in the number of persons with chronic HCV infection within the next decade; and

Whereas, Drug treatment programs and their related medical care providers are overwhelmed with the number of clients diagnosed with HCV; and

Whereas, Treatment regimes for Hepatitis C are costly and lengthy, often resulting in moderate to severe side effects; and

Whereas, According to the NIH, chemically addicted individuals in all stages of treatment and recovery are at great risk for contracting Hepatitis C, and many carriers of HCV do not fall neatly into known risk categories, since unexpected activities may lead to contamination, including infection caused by the use of contaminated tattoo needles or ink wells; and

Whereas, The OASAS Medical Advisory Panel recommends in their policy paper, entitled *Recommendations for Hepatitis C Control in OASAS Programs*, that all drug treatment providers make a strong commitment to develop a comprehensive and sound HCV control program that would include increase knowledge and awareness of the threat of Hepatitis C within the client and provider community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports comprehensive programs for the diagnosis and treatment of Hepatitis C, and educational efforts for substance abusers and persons with psychiatric disabilities who are substance abusers in order to curb the current epidemic of Hepatitis C infections.

