

## **Resolution No. 613**

### **IMPROVE VA & DOD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR HEPATITIS B**

WHEREAS, most individuals with chronic Hepatitis B enjoy good health, are symptom free and may not know they have the silent disease; and

WHEREAS, in developed countries like the U.S. chronic Hepatitis B is a preventable, highly-treatable long-term illness where, since 2002, Hepatitis B vaccinations have been required for all incoming U.S. military personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health & Human Services, in 2011, released our nation's first-ever comprehensive Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Hepatitis B; and

WHEREAS, a 2014 study by the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease concluded that Hepatitis B infection was twice as common in the veteran population as in the general population, and that VA screening for the infection was "suboptimal"; and

WHEREAS, studies by VA and DOD concluded that Hepatitis B infection is more than twice as high for non-Hispanic African Americans, as well as more prevalent for LGBT veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has unjustly discharged or denied the reenlistment requests of military service members with Hepatitis B who are on stable treatment plans, do not exhibit symptoms and are fit for duty; and

WHEREAS, transparency and accessible documentation are among the best means to educate and prevent stigma and discrimination; now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to take steps to improve Hepatitis B screening, follow-up testing and treatment among veterans born between 1945 and 1980; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to take steps to improve Hepatitis B screening, follow-up testing and treatment among minority veterans; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department of Defense to codify policies for retention and discharge of military personnel with chronic Hepatitis B infection in order to educate and ensure Hepatitis B policies are documented, transparent, equitable, and updated as medical capabilities, technologies, evidence-based practices, and DOD policy considerations evolve.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS