

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 481

Introduced by Kolterman, 24.

WHEREAS, herpes zoster (shingles) is a disease caused by the same virus (zoster) that causes chickenpox, and, therefore, any individual who has contracted chickenpox is at risk for shingles, corresponding to approximately ninety-eight percent of adults in the United States; and

WHEREAS, nearly one in three people in the United States will contract shingles in their lifetime, corresponding to an estimated one million people annually; and

WHEREAS, risk of shingles increases with age, with nearly half of those affected over sixty years of age and half of those living until eighty-five years of age developing shingles; and

WHEREAS, shingles is a viral infection that causes a painful rash that can be severe, along with other symptoms, including long-term nerve pain, fever, headache, chills, upset stomach, muscle weakness, skin infection, scarring, and a decrease or loss of vision or hearing; and

WHEREAS, as many as twenty percent of adults who have contracted shingles will develop postherpetic neuralgia, a debilitating complication of shingles that causes severe pain that may interfere with sleep and recreational activities and is associated with clinical depression; and

WHEREAS, vaccines have reduced the burden of widespread and often fatal diseases, enabling individuals to lead longer and healthier lives while reducing health care costs; and

WHEREAS, much attention has been paid to the importance of childhood vaccinations, but there is a general lack of awareness of vaccines recommended for adults and a misperception that immunizations are unnecessary for healthy adults; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that healthy adults fifty years of age and older be vaccinated against shingles to prevent shingles and shingles-related complications; and

WHEREAS, despite the recommendations of CDC officials and other experts that healthy adults be vaccinated against shingles, as of 2015, only thirty percent of eligible adults had received the shingles vaccine; and

WHEREAS, the annual economic burden for shingles in American adults is estimated to be between \$782 million and \$5 billion; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine has stated that one of the six causes of excess costs in the U.S. healthcare system is missed prevention opportunities; and

WHEREAS, millions of American adults go without routine and recommended vaccinations because our medical system is not set up to ensure that adults receive regular preventive healthcare; and

WHEREAS, as the month of August is observed as National Immunization Awareness Month, adults in Nebraska should be encouraged to speak with their healthcare providers to ensure that they have been properly vaccinated against shingles according to current CDC and ACIP recommendations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That April is designated as Shingles Awareness and Improvement Month in Nebraska, in order to increase public awareness of the importance of adults receiving vaccines against shingles, to promote outreach and education efforts concerning adult vaccination, and to encourage health care practitioners to discuss vaccines for shingles with adult patients.