

MEMO



DEC 13 2010

Senate of Pennsylvania

December 10, 2010

TO: ALL SENATORS
FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf *Stewart*
SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **First responder hepatitis B inoculations**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 343**, enacting the Emergency and Law Enforcement Officer Hepatitis B Inoculation Act to establish a statewide program to provide hepatitis B inoculations to state and local law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and other medical personnel. The program is meant to reach the first responders to an emergency situation, those persons who would be most at risk of a hepatitis B infection.

The Department of Health will implement a program that is consistent with accepted public health practices and the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The program will include prevention, including inoculations, screening, diagnosis, treatment and any necessary follow-up of cases.

The program will make use of any available federal funds to offset the costs of the inoculations. The department shall provide financial support to government or private agencies which provide screening, diagnostic, treatment, educational and follow-up services.

The department must publish an annual report that includes at a minimum the number of law enforcement officers, firefighters and medical personnel who are found to have hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B, an infection caused by a virus, targets the liver. Hepatitis B can cause cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. The virus is transferred from person to person in bodily fluids, such as blood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 2,000 to 4,000 people die every year from hepatitis B-related liver disease.

In the United States, hepatitis B is largely a disease of young adults aged 20-50 years. An estimated 800,000 to 1.4 million persons have chronic hepatitis B virus infection. However, rates of acute hepatitis B in the United States have declined thanks largely to inoculations.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.