

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 3659

To provide for a study and for demonstration projects regarding cases of hepatitis C among firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians who are employees or volunteers of units of local government.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2000

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

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## A BILL

To provide for a study and for demonstration projects regarding cases of hepatitis C among firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians who are employees or volunteers of units of local government.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Emergency Response  
5       Employees Disease Protection Act of 2000”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) Hepatitis C is a blood-borne pathogen that  
2           is a major cause of chronic liver disease. According  
3           to the American Liver Foundation, approximately  
4           1.8 percent of the general population is infected with  
5           the disease.

6           (2) There is no known cure for hepatitis C.

7           (3) Emergency response employees and volun-  
8           teers of units of local government (such as fire-  
9           fighters, paramedics, and emergency medical techni-  
10          cians) are at high risk of contracting the disease due  
11          to the unique nature of their jobs.

12          (4) The only emergency response organization  
13          that has a comprehensive program to test all of its  
14          members for hepatitis C is Local 22 of the Inter-  
15          national Association of Fire Fighters, representing  
16          the firefighters of the City of Philadelphia.

17          (5) According to these tests, 130 of 2,100 fire-  
18          fighters tested positive for the disease, which is ap-  
19          proximately 6 percent of those tested.

20          (6) The City of Philadelphia recently made a  
21          decision to commit \$3,000,000 each year to provide  
22          treatment for 200 employees infected with the dis-  
23          ease. Philadelphia is the only major city to devote  
24          such resources to the epidemic of hepatitis C among  
25          emergency response employees.

1           (7) The Federal government should provide for  
2           a study to determine the prevalence of hepatitis C  
3           among firefighters, paramedics, and emergency med-  
4           ical technicians who are employees or volunteers of  
5           units of local government, and should provide for  
6           demonstration projects to provide training, testing,  
7           and treatment regarding cases of the disease among  
8           such employees and volunteers.

9   **SEC. 3. STUDY AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS REGARD-**  
10                   **ING CASES OF HEPATITIS C AMONG CERTAIN**  
11                   **EMERGENCY RESPONSE EMPLOYEES.**

12           (a) STUDY REGARDING PREVALENCE AMONG CER-  
13   TAIN EMERGENCY RESPONSE EMPLOYEES.—

14           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and  
15           Human Services (referred to in this section as the  
16           “Secretary”), in consultation with the Secretary of  
17           Labor, shall conduct a study to determine—

18                   (A) an estimate of the prevalence of hepa-  
19                   titis C among designated emergency response  
20                   employees in the United States; and

21                   (B) the likely means through which such  
22                   employees become infected with such disease in  
23                   the course of performing their duties as such  
24                   employees.

1           (2) DESIGNATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE EM-  
2       PLOYEES.—For purposes of this section, the term  
3       “designated emergency response employees” means  
4       firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical  
5       technicians who are employees or volunteers of units  
6       of local government.

7           (3) DATE CERTAIN FOR COMPLETION; REPORT  
8       TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall commence the  
9       study under paragraph (1) not later than 90 days  
10      after the date of the enactment of this Act. Not later  
11      that one year after such date, the Secretary shall  
12      complete the study and submit to the Congress a re-  
13      port describing the findings of the study.

14      (b) DEMONSTRATIONS PROJECTS REGARDING  
15 TRAINING AND TREATMENT.—

16           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consulta-  
17      tion with the Secretary of Labor, shall make grants  
18      to qualifying local governments for the purpose of  
19      carrying out demonstration projects that (directly or  
20      through arrangements with nonprofit private enti-  
21      ties) carry out each of the following activities:

22           (A) Training designated emergency re-  
23      sponse employees in minimizing the risk of in-  
24      fection with hepatitis C in performing their du-  
25      ties as such employees.

1 (B) Testing such employees for infection  
2 with the disease.

3 (C) Treating the employees for the disease.

4 (2) QUALIFYING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—For  
5 purposes of this section, the term “qualifying local  
6 government” means a unit of local government  
7 whose population of designated emergency response  
8 employees has a prevalence of hepatitis C that is not  
9 less than 200 percent of the national average for the  
10 prevalence of such disease in such populations.

11 (3) CONFIDENTIALITY.—A grant may be made  
12 under paragraph (1) only if the qualifying local gov-  
13 ernment involved agrees to ensure that information  
14 regarding the testing or treatment of designated  
15 emergency response employees pursuant to the grant  
16 is maintained confidentially in a manner not incon-  
17 sistent with applicable law.

18 (4) EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary shall pro-  
19 vide for an evaluation of each demonstration project  
20 under paragraph (1) in order to determine the ex-  
21 tent to which the project has been effective in car-  
22 rying out the activities described in such paragraph.

23 (5) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than  
24 180 days after the date on which all grants under

1 paragraph (1) have been expended, the Secretary  
2 shall submit to the Congress a report providing—

3 (A) a summary of evaluations under para-  
4 graph (4); and

5 (B) the recommendations of the Secretary  
6 for administrative or legislative initiatives re-  
7 garding the activities described in paragraph  
8 (1).

9 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the  
10 purpose of carrying out this section, there is authorized  
11 to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2001.

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