

# The State of Washington



## Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne chronic viral infection in the United States, with an estimated 4 million Americans and approximately 110,000 Washingtonians infected with the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that approximately 30,000 new cases of hepatitis C infection occur annually in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC estimates that at least 10,000 Americans die each year of chronic hepatitis C-related disease, and predict a three-fold increase in the hepatitis C-related death rate by the year 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, infection with the hepatitis C virus is at least three times more prevalent in the United States than infection with HIV, and the number of Washingtonians infected with the hepatitis C virus is estimated to be eight times greater than the number infected with HIV; and

**WHEREAS**, persons infected with the hepatitis C virus are often unaware of their status for as long as 10 to 20 years and are unknowing reservoirs for continued spread of the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, no vaccine is available to prevent chronic hepatitis C; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC has stated that hepatitis C is a disease of major public health importance and has recommended the implementation of risk-reduction counseling and services; identification, counseling, and testing of persons at risk; medical management of infected persons; professional and public education; and surveillance and research to monitor disease trends.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim May 2007 as

### *Viral Hepatitis Awareness Month*

in Washington State, and I urge all citizens to recognize the importance of hepatitis prevention with education and information programs and activities.

Signed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2007

*Christine Gregoire*

Governor Christine O. Gregoire

