



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Holton

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational hearing - Health Department - Sexually Transmitted Diseases

FOR the purpose of inviting the Health Commissioner and the Program Director, STD and HIV Prevention Services Program to report on the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in Baltimore City, the rate of occurrence among our City's youth, and the success rate of efforts to slow the rate of transmission of STDs among Baltimore City residents.

Recitals

On April 7, 2010, the Baltimore City Health Department announced increased STD screening efforts in conjunction with National STD Awareness Month. A new mobile outreach program van provided screenings throughout the City during the month of April, and the Department participated in screening and education events at Baltimore City Community College and Morgan State and Coppin State Universities.

The increased emphasis on STD occurred in conjunction with reports from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States, and almost half of those are among young people aged 15 to 24. Baltimore City is particularly affected with a disproportionately high rate of disease compared to the rest of the nation - in 2009, Baltimore reported 7,893 cases of chlamydia, 2,889 cases of gonorrhea, and 240 cases of early syphilis.

The CDC reports that the consequences of untreated STDs is devastating. Untreated gonorrhea and chlamydia can result in pelvic inflammatory disease in women, a condition that can cause infertility. Each year STDs cause at least 24,000 women in the U.S. to become infertile. Untreated syphilis can lead to serious long-term complications, including brain, cardiovascular, and organ damage. Syphilis in pregnant women can also result in congenital syphilis, which can cause stillbirth, death soon after birth in up to 40% of cases, and physical deformity and neurological complications in children who survive. Studies suggest that people with gonorrhea, chlamydia, or syphilis are at an increased risk for HIV. This is especially a concern for young black men, among whom the rate of syphilis is increasing.

In November 2010, the annual CDC report on STDs show that although the U.S. gonorrhea rate fell to a record low in 2009, the syphilis rate notched up again, and the chlamydia rate reached a historic high. The report also shows that the nation is nowhere near meeting the STD goals of Healthy People 2010, an ongoing national scorecard for good health last updated by the 2000 administration.

One of the goals of Healthy People 2010 was to have only a small fraction - 3% - of young men and women test positive for chlamydia at STD clinics. Instead, the 2009 data showed much higher infection rates among clinic visitors - 16% for women and 24% for men. While the 2009 gonorrhea rate of 99 cases per 100,000 persons was the lowest reported since government record keeping began in 1941, it still dwarfed the hoped-for 2010 rate of 19 cases per 100,000 persons.

Our Health Department reports that sexually transmitted diseases pose a serious public health threat to Americans, particularly young women, African Americans, men who have sex with men, and individuals living in poverty or who have limited access to healthcare. STDs cost the United States' healthcare system as much as \$15.3 billion annually.

Although Baltimore City Health Department observed National STD Awareness Month in April 2011, this year's events were overshadowed by ceremonies surrounding the passing of a notable state and local political figure. This hearing will provide an update on how Baltimore's citizens, a significant number of whom fall into the categories most affected, are being impacted by STDs and the effectiveness of current preventative and treatment programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Health Commissioner and the Program Director, STD and HIV Prevention Services Program are invited to report on the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in Baltimore City, the rate of occurrence among our City's youth, and the success rate of efforts to slow the rate of transmission of STDs among Baltimore City residents.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor; the Health Commissioner; the Program Director, STD and HIV Prevention Services Program; the Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Congressional Delegation, the Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the Secretary of the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the President and Members of STAR, the Executive Director and Members of WAR, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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