

## 1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 494

*Encouraging all appropriate providers of health or residential care to the elderly and vulnerable populations to make available pneumococcal and influenza vaccines for those individuals who are most in need of such protection.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 17, 1999  
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 15, 1999

WHEREAS, pneumococcal disease and influenza together are the sixth leading cause of death in the United States each year, claiming nearly as many lives as AIDS and breast cancer combined; and

WHEREAS, the New England Journal of Medicine in a recent article concluded that wider use of pneumococcal vaccine can help prevent institutional outbreaks of the disease, which can infect the lungs (pneumonia), bloodstream (bacteremia) or brain lining (meningitis); and

WHEREAS, older adults are particularly vulnerable, with a death rate for bacteremia of 30 to 40 percent; and

WHEREAS, the importance of vaccination is further highlighted by the declining effectiveness of antibiotics to treat pneumococcal disease; and

WHEREAS, the National Nursing Home Survey of organized pneumococcal vaccination programs and immunization rates found that only 42 percent of nursing home residents were vaccinated against pneumococcal disease; and

WHEREAS, these rates compare to a goal of 80 percent vaccination rates among institutionalized chronically ill or older people established by the U.S. Public Health Service in its "Healthy People 2000" initiative; and

WHEREAS, despite recommendations by virtually all major medical and public health organizations, only about 35 percent of all of those over the age of 65 have received pneumococcal vaccine and the numbers are even lower for minorities; and

WHEREAS, to address this issue, the Pneumonia/Flu 2000 initiative to promote influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations for people on Medicare is hoped to improve low vaccination rates; and

WHEREAS, pneumococcal vaccination is usually given only once in a lifetime and is Medicare Part B reimbursable; and

WHEREAS, in Virginia, the percentage of persons age 65 and older who reported receiving pneumococcal vaccine is only about 38 percent; and

WHEREAS, several states, including New Jersey, South Dakota and Delaware, have adopted mandates that pneumococcal vaccine be offered to all residents and users of eldercare facilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That all appropriate providers of health care to the elderly and other vulnerable populations be encouraged to make available pneumococcal and influenza vaccines for those individuals who are most in need of such protection; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the presidents of the Medical Society of Virginia, the Virginia Health Care Association, the Virginia Hospital and HealthCare Association and the Virginia Association of Nonprofit Homes for the Aging in order that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

ENROLLED

SI494ER