

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Chronic hepatitis B (HBV) affects approximately 350 million people worldwide, and the hepatitis C virus (HCV) affects approximately 170-200 million people. Many of these people are still living with the burden of stigma associated with these viral infections; and

WHEREAS: Currently, 1.4 million people live with chronic hepatitis B, and 3.5 million live with chronic hepatitis C in the United States alone. Since the 1980s, the incidence of liver cancer has tripled, and liver cancer has quickly become a leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, claiming more than 26,000 lives in the United States annually; and

WHEREAS: Two of the viruses, HBV and HCV, will not present symptoms of infection for many years causing residents to neglect early screening, allowing the virus to manifest into liver disease. With no symptoms at the early stages of disease, up to 65 to 75 percent of Americans with HBV or HCV are not aware of their diagnosis and in turn, do not seek treatment. Prevention techniques and vaccinations have significantly reduced the current incidence of hepatitis; and

WHEREAS: Barriers to adequate treatment, such as high costs for drug treatment regimens, scarcity of hepatitis screening and testing, the need for consultation from hepatitis specialists only and reduced cooperation from insurance companies contribute to the burden of illness and influences the effectiveness and accessibility of treatment; and

WHEREAS: Hepatitis risk assessments indicate that early detection of hepatitis can be vital in the prevention of acute hepatitis leading to a chronic infection. It also reveals the dangers of being unaware of a hepatic diagnosis. As a result, the state of Arkansas finds it beneficial to the overall health and well-being of its citizens if everyone is tested as a method of prevention and early detection; and

WHEREAS: Studies have found that patients whose treatment began at early stages in their illness have experienced improved quality of life and increased cost effectiveness. Including effective vaccines that protect residents from hepatitis B and new treatment regimens for hepatitis C;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, as

**NATIONAL HEPATITIS TESTING DAY**

across the state, and I urge all citizens to contact the HFI, The National Black Nurses Association, their primary care provider or their local health department.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, in the year of our Lord 2016.



*Asa Hutchinson*

Asa Hutchinson, Governor

*Mark Martin*  
Mark Martin, Secretary Of State