

(H. B. 2553)

(No. 225)

(Approved October 9, 2006)

## **AN ACT**

To declare September of each year as “Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.”

### **STATEMENT OF MOTIVES**

Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer among men in the United States, and the primary cause of deaths due to cancer among men in Puerto Rico, preceded only by lung cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates that during 2006 about 234,460 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed and 27,350 men will die of it.

Although men of any age can get prostate cancer, it is found most often in men over age 50. In fact, more than 8 of 10 men with prostate cancer are over the age of 65. African-American men are at higher risk than Caucasian men. Men with a family history of prostate cancer are at higher risk too. Family history means that your father or a brother had prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer is a group of abnormal cells in the prostate. Prostate cancer can be aggressive, which means it grows quickly and spreads to other parts of the body. When cancer spreads, doctors say the cancer has "metastasized." Or it may be a slow-growing cancer that remains in the prostate that causes few problems, if any. Three out of four cases of prostate cancer are of the slow-growing type that is relatively harmless.

For such reasons, it is necessary to raise awareness in men with respect to the importance of addressing the symptoms early in order to avoid greater harm. Once

prostate cancer has been diagnosed, tests are performed to determine whether the cancer cells have extended within the prostate or to other organs.

The process used to define whether the cancer has extended within the prostate or to other organs is staging classification (or staging). It is important to find out the staging (also known as the clinical stage) of the illness in order to plan the treatment.

We must raise awareness about prostate cancer, because it is the most common type of cancer, and the most unknown among men in Puerto Rico. One out of every six men may suffer prostate cancer.

Often, this type of cancer does not cause any symptoms, therefore, it is very important for Puerto Rican men 40 years old and over to have the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test and a physical examination performed once a year.

In Puerto Rico, private entities such as Abbott Laboratories, raise awareness about prostate illnesses through screening clinics. We wish to hereby promote that other entities join the Puerto Rico Department of Health in raising awareness of this problem, so that every day less Puerto Ricans may suffer from this terrifying illness.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:**

Section 1.- September of each year is hereby declared as “Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.”

Section 2.- During this month, the Department of State shall issue a proclamation in this regard and the Department of Health, in cooperation with voluntary entities, shall hold several activities to raise awareness about the prostate cancer problem in Puerto Rico.

Section 3.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.