WHEREAS, The acute and chronic consequences of Hepatitis B virus (HBV) may result in chronic liver damage (cirrhosis) which causes 5,000 deaths per year and is the leading cause of liver cancer which causes 1,000 deaths per year; and

WHEREAS, In the past decade the incidence of Hepatitis B has jumped among Americans between the ages of 15 and 39, with between 200,000 and 300,000 new cases each year; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, most infections occur among adults and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, There are approximately 1 million carriers of Hepatitis B in the United States, a third of whom show no symptoms and are unaware that they are infected and contagious, which can transmit the disease for a year or even a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, In approximately 30 to 40% of the Hepatitis B cases reported the method of transmission is unknown; and

WHEREAS, Like AIDS, the Hepatitis B virus is transmitted by sexual contact; however, it is more contagious than AIDS, can live outside of the body for up to a week, and unlike AIDS puts people in the same household as an infected person at risk; and

WHEREAS, Sharing razors, nail files, toothbrushes or ear piercing instruments has the same potential for transmitting Hepatitis B as a sexual exposure; and

WHEREAS, Children and parents who may be exposed to Hepatitis B and other blood borne pathogens in the course of normal activities will benefit from the preventative measures known as Universal Precautions; and

WHEREAS, A safe and effective vaccine exists which is 90 to 95 percent effective, and may be given to persons of any age; and

WHEREAS, The immunization Practices Advisory Committee of the U. S. Public Health Service, the American College Health Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Liver Foundation recommend vaccination against Hepatitis B for the adolescent population; now therefore be it
RESOLVED, That the Tennessee PTA support the development and use of curriculum that will heighten the awareness of Hepatitis B and encourage the use of Universal Precautions in an age appropriate fashion for students K-12 and their parents; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Tennessee PTA encourage the inclusion of all children and adolescents in the current immunization program to eradicate Hepatitis B until only newborns need to be vaccinated.

Adopted by the 1996 Convention Delegates
Reaffirmed by the 2001 Convention Delegates