ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 120

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 14, 2024

The Assembly Health Committee reports favorably Assembly Joint Resolution No. 120.

This resolution designates the first full week of May of each year as "Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week" in NJ. Tardive Dyskinesia (TD) is a persistent, irreversible, and potentially disabling neurological condition characterized by uncontrollable repetitive movements of the face, torso, or other body parts. This involuntary movement disorder is caused by medications that help control dopamine, such as antipsychotics prescribed to treat people living with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. People with mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, major depression, schizophrenia, and schizoaffective disorder, or gastrointestinal disorders, including gastroparesis, nausea, and vomiting, may be treated with medications that work as dopamine receptor blocking agents (DRBAs). It is estimated that about 1.1 million adults in New Jersey, or 16.14 percent of adults in the State, are living with a mental illness and as a result are likely to receive DRBAs as a form of treatment, which can lead to the onset of TD.

It is vital that people taking DRBAs are monitored for TD through regular screenings as recommended by the American Psychiatric Association because long-term use of DRBAs can lead to the onset of TD. People living with TD face physical, social and emotional barriers due to the stigma associated with uncontrollable movements, which can further lead to worsened mental health symptoms and cause embarrassment or withdrawal from society. It is estimated that TD affects approximately 600,000 people in the U.S. and approximately 70 percent of people with TD have not been diagnosed. Although TD is treatable, many people with the disorder are unaware of the treatment options. Raising awareness about the symptoms and impact of TD will promote the importance of early screening, diagnosis, and treatment.