# ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION
# No. 104

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY
## 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

**Sponsored by:**
**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**
**District 37 (Bergen)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Permanently designates May as "Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Awareness Month" in NJ.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.

**A JOINT RESOLUTION** permanently designating May as "Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Awareness Month" in New Jersey.

**WHEREAS,** Donations of bone marrow and stem cells containing umbilical cord blood can help cure tens of thousands of people afflicted with life-threatening diseases, including leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood related diseases, and the need for these donations grows each year; in 2010, 5,228 blood stem cell transplants were performed, and currently, there are approximately 92,000 Americans waiting for a bone marrow transplant; and

**WHEREAS,** There are several bone marrow and stem cell donor registries in the United States, the largest of which is the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP); The NMDP lists nine million donors and stores nearly 145,000 units of umbilical cord blood; unfortunately, the number of people who undergo bone marrow or stem cell transplants increases every year, and since there are not enough people registered to donate bone marrow or umbilical cord blood, the likelihood that a person in need of a transplant finds an appropriate genetic match is greatly diminished; and

**WHEREAS,** Public health officials face a number of obstacles in trying to close the gap between the number of people in need of bone marrow and stem cell donations and the number of people willing to donate, including the cost of tissue testing for potential donors, lack of public awareness about the critical need for donations, and the lack of widespread knowledge about the relative ease of becoming a donor; and

**WHEREAS,** The lack of public awareness about the importance of donations is especially true for minorities who, in general, are very poorly represented in the NMDP; of the nine million donors registered with the NMDP, only 8% are of African American descent, and 12% are a combination of other ethnic groups, including, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, and Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders; with such a small pool of potential donors, and given the fact that in order to have a successful transplant, a donor and patient must be genetically compatible and from the same racial or ethnic background, minorities face limited prospects of finding a donor with matching blood or tissue type; and

**WHEREAS,** An array of misconceptions concerning bone marrow and stem cell donations have also prevented public health officials and donor registries from increasing the number of potential donors; these misconceptions include: the idea that the donation process is painful, and the belief that there is an age limit for prospective donors; and

**WHEREAS,** NMDP and other bone marrow and stem cell donor registries have developed educational programs and outreach initiatives that address these misconceptions, established recruitment programs to identify potential donors, particularly in

the minority community, and have been instrumental in raising public awareness about the importance of bone marrow and umbilical cord blood donation in treating many life threatening diseases, and the need to recruit more volunteer donors of all racial or ethnic backgrounds; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The month of May is permanently designated as "Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Awareness Month" in New Jersey in order to promote public awareness about the importance of bone marrow and umbilical cord blood donation in treating cancer and many other life threatening diseases, and the need to recruit more volunteer donors of all racial or ethnic backgrounds.

2. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation and call upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe "Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Awareness Month" with appropriate events and activities.

3. This join resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This resolution permanently designates the month of May as "Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Awareness Month" in the State of New Jersey to promote public awareness about the importance of bone marrow and umbilical cord blood donation in treating cancer and many other life threatening diseases, and the need to recruit more volunteer donors of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.