

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 124

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Designates September of each year as “Hydrocephalus Awareness Month.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



- 1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the month of September of each
2 year as “Hydrocephalus Awareness Month” in New Jersey.
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, Hydrocephalus, derived from the Greek words “hydro,”
5 meaning water and “cephalus,” is a condition that has no cure and
6 the primary characteristic is excessive accumulation of
7 cerebrospinal fluid in the brain resulting in abnormal widening of
8 spaces in the brain called ventricles, which creates harmful pressure
9 on the tissues of the brain and can be fatal if untreated; and
- 10 **WHEREAS**, There are two primary types of hydrocephalus: congenital
11 hydrocephalus, which is present at birth and may be caused by
12 either events or influences that occur during fetal development or
13 genetic abnormalities, and acquired hydrocephalus, which develops
14 at the time of birth or at some point afterward and affects
15 individuals of all ages and may be caused by injury or disease; and
- 16 **WHEREAS**, Two other forms of hydrocephalus which primarily affect
17 adults are ex-vacuo, which occurs when stroke or traumatic injury
18 cause damage to the brain, and normal pressure hydrocephalus,
19 which can happen to people at any age, but it is most common
20 among the elderly and often whose cause is unknown; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, The number of people who develop hydrocephalus or who
22 are currently living with it is difficult to establish since there is no
23 national registry of people with the condition but experts estimate
24 that it affects over one million Americans and occurs in one in
25 every 1,000 live births and that an estimated 700,000 older
26 Americans have normal pressure hydrocephalus; and
- 27 **WHEREAS**, The only treatment for hydrocephalus requires brain
28 surgery. Most often, hydrocephalus is treated by surgically inserting
29 a shunt system which diverts the flow of cerebrospinal fluid to
30 another area of the body where it can be absorbed as part of the
31 normal circulatory process; and
- 32 **WHEREAS**, Affected individuals and their families should be aware
33 that hydrocephalus poses risks to both cognitive and physical
34 development and often require repeated brain surgeries over a
35 lifetime. However, children diagnosed with the disorder benefit
36 from early intervention programs, rehabilitation therapies and
37 educational interventions and many go on to lead lives with few
38 limitations; and
- 39 **WHEREAS**, In 2009, the United States Congress passed a Resolution
40 designating the month of September as National Hydrocephalus
41 Awareness Month; and
- 42 **WHEREAS**, Representatives from the national, state and local levels,
43 the New Jersey Shore community of the Hydrocephalus Awareness
44 Association, and the national-level Hydrocephalus Association in
45 conjunction with leaders from professional, community and
46 medical-based organizations and associations, are dedicated to
47 increasing public awareness of hydrocephalus and the needs of

1 families, resulting in better health for all individuals in the State of
2 New Jersey and throughout the nation; now, therefore,

3
4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
5 *State of New Jersey:*

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7 1. The month of September of each year is designated as
8 “Hydrocephalus Awareness Month” in the State of New Jersey to
9 foster an awareness and understanding of the different types of
10 hydrocephalus.

11
12 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
13 proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State
14 to observe “Hydrocephalus Awareness Month” with appropriate
15 activities and programs.

16
17 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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20 STATEMENT

21
22 This joint resolution designates the month of September of each
23 year as “Hydrocephalus Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

24 Hydrocephalus is a condition where excessive amounts of
25 cerebrospinal fluid accumulates in the brain, which results in
26 abnormal widening of spaces in the brain called ventricles. This
27 causes harmful pressure on the tissues of the brain and can be fatal
28 if left untreated.

29 Congenital hydrocephalus and acquired hydrocephalus are the
30 two major types of the disease. Congenital hydrocephalus is present
31 at birth and may be caused by genetic abnormalities or events or
32 influences that occur during fetal development. Acquired
33 hydrocephalus develops at the time of birth or some time afterward
34 and affects individuals of all ages. It may be acquired through
35 injury or disease. Two other forms of hydrocephalus primarily
36 affecting adults are ex-vacuo, which occurs when stroke or
37 traumatic injury cause damage to the brain, and normal pressure
38 hydrocephalus. The cause of the condition is unknown and while it
39 can occur in people at any age, it is most common among the
40 elderly.

41 There is no national registry tracking the number of
42 hydrocephalus cases. Nevertheless, experts estimate that the
43 condition affects over one million Americans and occurs in one out
44 of every 1,000 births. Additionally, an estimated 700,000 older
45 Americans have normal pressure hydrocephalus.

46 The only treatment for hydrocephalus is surgery, which entails
47 the insertion of a shunt system to divert the flow of cerebrospinal

1 fluid to another area of the body where the fluid can be absorbed as
2 part of the normal circulatory process.

3 Individuals affected by this disease and their families should
4 know that hydrocephalus poses risks to both cognitive and physical
5 development and often requires repeated brain surgeries over a
6 lifetime. However, children diagnosed with the disorder benefit
7 from early intervention programs, rehabilitation therapies and
8 educational intervention. As a result of early intervention, many
9 children go on to lead lives with few limitations.