

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 95

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Permanently designates September of each year as “Chiari Malformation Awareness Month” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** permanently designating September of each
2 year as “Chiari Malformation Awareness Month” in New Jersey.
3

4 **WHEREAS**, Chiari malformations are structural defects in the base of
5 the skull and cerebellum, the part of the brain that controls balance;
6 and
7 **WHEREAS**, Normally the cerebellum and parts of the brain stem sit
8 above an opening in the skull that allows the spinal cord to pass
9 through it (called the foramen magnum). When part of the
10 cerebellum extends below the foramen magnum and into the upper
11 spinal canal, it is called Chiari malformation (CM); and
12 **WHEREAS**, CM may develop when part of the skull is smaller than
13 normal or misshapen, which forces the cerebellum to be pushed
14 down into the foramen magnum and spinal canal; and
15 **WHEREAS**, CM causes pressure on the cerebellum and brain stem that
16 may affect functions controlled by these areas and block the flow of
17 cerebrospinal fluid—the clear liquid that surrounds and cushions
18 the brain and spinal cord; and
19 **WHEREAS**, CM has several different causes. Most often it is caused
20 by structural defects in the brain and spinal cord that occur during
21 fetal development and is called primary or congenital Chiari
22 malformation; and
23 **WHEREAS**, CM can also be caused later in life if spinal fluid is drained
24 excessively from the lumbar or thoracic areas of the spine as a
25 result of a traumatic injury, disease, or infection. This is called
26 acquired or secondary Chiari malformation; and
27 **WHEREAS**, CM is classified by the severity of the disorder and the
28 parts of the brain that protrude into the spinal canal. General
29 symptoms of CM include, headaches, tinnitus, curvature of the
30 spine, slow heart rhythm, weakness, trouble swallowing, balance
31 issues, dizziness, abnormal breathing, and sleep apnea; and
32 **WHEREAS**, There are three types of CM. CM Type I, which may not
33 cause symptoms, occurs as the skull and brain are developing and is
34 the most common form of CM. It is usually first noticed in
35 adolescence or adulthood, often by accident during an examination
36 for another condition; and
37 **WHEREAS**, CM Type II has symptoms that are generally more severe
38 than Type 1. These symptoms usually appear during childhood and
39 can cause life-threatening complications during infancy or early
40 childhood; and
41 **WHEREAS**, CM Type III is very rare and the most serious form of the
42 condition. The symptoms of Type III appear in infancy and can
43 cause debilitating and life-threatening complications, including
44 hydrocephalus and spina bifida; and
45 **WHEREAS**, Treatment for CM depends on the severity and
46 characteristics of a patient’s condition. If there are no symptoms, a
47 patient is monitored with regular examinations and magnetic

1 resonance imaging. Symptomatic CM is treated with surgery or
2 pain medication, as appropriate; and
3 **WHEREAS**, The National Institutes of Health is conducting research on
4 the genetic factors that increase the risk of developing Chiari
5 malformation and other related brain disorders; and
6 **WHEREAS**, This research has identified gene mutations that cause
7 brain overgrowth that may accompany CM and could lead to new
8 diagnostic tests and better treatments options for the disorder; and
9 **WHEREAS**, The permanent designation of the month of September as
10 “Chiari Malformation Awareness Month” will serve to raise public
11 awareness about the signs and symptoms of Chiari Malformation
12 and support research efforts to develop new diagnostic tests and
13 additional treatments for this disorder; now, therefore,

14
15 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
16 *State of New Jersey:*

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18 1. The month of September shall be permanently designated as
19 “Chiari Malformation Awareness Month” in the State of New
20 Jersey in order to raise public awareness about the signs and
21 symptoms of Chiari Malformation and support research efforts to
22 develop new diagnostic tests and additional treatments for this
23 disorder.

24
25 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
26 proclamation recognizing September as “Chiari Malformation
27 Awareness Month” in New Jersey and calling upon public officials,
28 the citizens of the State, and other interested groups to observe the
29 month with appropriate activities and programs.

30
31 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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34 **STATEMENT**

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36 This joint resolution permanently designates the month of
37 September as “Chiari Malformation Awareness Month” in the State
38 of New Jersey in order to raise public awareness about the signs and
39 symptoms of Chiari Malformation and support research efforts to
40 develop new diagnostic tests and additional treatments for this
41 disorder.