

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 28

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Designates June of each year as “Scleroderma Awareness Month.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating June of each year as
2 “Scleroderma Awareness Month.”
3

4 **WHEREAS**, Scleroderma, or systemic sclerosis, is a chronic connective
5 tissue disease, generally classified as one of the autoimmune
6 rheumatic diseases, in which the body's soft tissues contract and
7 harden due to an overproduction of collagen, and which in certain
8 cases can be disabling and even fatal; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Hardening of the skin is one of the most visible
10 manifestations of the disease; however, it may be found in a variety
11 of forms among patients and can affect many areas of the body,
12 including the heart, lungs, kidneys, and gastrointestinal system; and

13 **WHEREAS**, The effects of scleroderma can range from very mild to
14 life-threatening, depending on which parts of the body are affected
15 and the extent to which they are affected; however, a mild case can
16 become more serious if not properly treated, and prompt and proper
17 diagnosis and treatment by qualified physicians may minimize the
18 symptoms of scleroderma and lessen the chance for irreversible
19 damage from the disease; and

20 **WHEREAS**, The diagnosis of scleroderma is difficult because it
21 presents with symptoms similar to other autoimmune diseases;
22 diagnosing the disease may require consultation with a
23 rheumatologist or dermatologist, or both, and entail blood studies
24 and numerous other specialized tests, depending upon which organs
25 are affected; and

26 **WHEREAS**, An estimated 300,000 people in the United States have
27 scleroderma, about one-third of whom have the systemic form of it;
28 and

29 **WHEREAS**, Localized scleroderma is more common in children, while
30 systemic scleroderma is more common in adults, but the disease is
31 found in every age group from infants to the elderly, with its onset
32 occurring most frequently between the ages of 25 to 55; female
33 patients outnumber male patients by about four-to-one, and the
34 average age at diagnosis is in the forties; and

35 **WHEREAS**, Factors other than sex, such as race and ethnic background,
36 may influence the risk of getting scleroderma, the age of onset, and
37 the pattern or severity of internal organ involvement; although
38 scleroderma is not directly inherited, some scientists feel there is a
39 slight predisposition to it in families with a history of rheumatic
40 diseases; and

41 **WHEREAS**, The exact causes of scleroderma are unknown, but
42 scientists and medical investigators in a wide variety of fields are
43 working hard to make those determinations; and

44 **WHEREAS**, Most persons with scleroderma do not have any relatives
45 with the disease and their children do not get scleroderma; research
46 findings indicate that a susceptibility gene increases the likelihood
47 of a person developing the disease but, by itself, does not cause the
48 disease; and

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

34 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

The resolution directs the Governor to annually issue a proclamation calling upon public officials, health care professionals, and the citizens of this State to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs designed to raise public awareness of this disease.