

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 44

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Designates March 6th of every year as “World Lymphedema Day.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating March 6th as “World
2 Lymphedema Day” in New Jersey.
3

4 **WHEREAS**, Lymphedema is a chronic condition in which the flow of
5 the lymphatic system, which is part of the body’s immune system,
6 is impaired and as a result the lymphatic fluid in an affected area of
7 the body, often an arm or leg, cannot drain properly; and

8 **WHEREAS**, When present at birth the condition is referred to as
9 primary lymphedema, while secondary lymphedema is that which
10 results from damage to the lymphatic system due to radiation
11 therapy, surgery, severe burns, or other traumatic injury; and

12 **WHEREAS**, Those suffering from lymphedema often first notice a
13 heaviness, tightness, warmth, or tingling sensation in the affected
14 extremity. As the condition progresses, the swelling of the
15 extremity becomes pronounced and painful, seriously impairing the
16 affected person’s mobility, functioning, and quality of life; and

17 **WHEREAS**, In the United States, lymphedema is often a result of
18 treatment for breast cancer, although survivors of other types of
19 cancer may be susceptible to developing the condition, particularly
20 those treated for cancers of the neck and head; and

21 **WHEREAS**, Historically, medical students received very little, if any,
22 instruction regarding lymphedema, with the result that physicians
23 may not discuss the risk of lymphedema with their patients who are
24 facing treatment for cancer, and frequently the condition is
25 misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed; and

26 **WHEREAS**, The Lymphatic Education & Research Network (LE&RN)
27 estimates that as many as 10 million Americans suffer from
28 lymphedema and other lymphatic disease, while lymphedema is
29 estimated to affect 15 percent of all cancer survivors and 40 percent
30 of breast cancer patients; and

31 **WHEREAS**, The National Cancer Institute predicts a 42 percent
32 increase in cancer survivors aged 65 years and older, and that as
33 many as 3 million Medicare beneficiaries who are cancer survivors
34 will require treatment for lymphedema by 2020; and

35 **WHEREAS**, Once lymphedema develops it can be very difficult to
36 manage through treatment, and because of the risks and difficulties
37 posed by the condition, those afflicted must often modify their lives
38 to such an extent that they may not be able to participate in many
39 activities that they previously enjoyed; and

40 **WHEREAS**, Because the condition is underdiagnosed and undertreated,
41 lymphedema results in unquantifiable annual costs to health care
42 providers and insurers, including Medicare, due to the high
43 potential for acute infection which, when it occurs, requires
44 emergency treatment; and

45 **WHEREAS**, In light of the severe physical, psychological, and financial
46 impact of lymphedema on individuals and society, it is incumbent
47 upon the State to recognize and support the courageous individuals
48 living with this debilitating condition; and

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1 WHEREAS, It is fitting to recognize and support the individuals and
2 organizations that advocate tirelessly to educate health care
3 providers and the public about lymphedema; now, therefore,

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

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8 1. "World Lymphedema Day" in New Jersey shall be observed
9 annually on March 6th to recognize the considerable challenges
10 faced by individuals who suffer from lymphedema, to support them
11 and their caregivers, and to increase awareness of the condition
12 among health care providers and the public.

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14 2. The Governor shall annually issue a proclamation calling
15 upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe "World
16 Lymphedema Day" with appropriate activities and programs.

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18 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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23 This resolution designates March 6th of every year as "World
24 Lymphedema Day" in New Jersey. Lymphedema is a chronic
25 condition in which the flow of the lymphatic system, which is part
26 of the body's immune system, is impaired and as a result the
27 lymphatic fluid in an affected area of the body, often an arm or leg,
28 cannot drain properly. As the condition progresses, swelling of the
29 affected extremity becomes pronounced and painful, seriously
30 impairing the affected person's mobility, functioning, and quality of
31 life. Damage to the lymphatic system due to radiation therapy,
32 surgery, severe burns, or other traumatic injury can result in
33 lymphedema, and in the United States, the condition is frequently a
34 result of treatment for breast cancer. The Lymphatic Education &
35 Research Network (LE&RN) estimates that 10 million Americans
36 suffer from lymphedema and other lymphatic disease, while
37 lymphedema is estimated to affect 15 percent of all cancer survivors
38 and 40 percent of breast cancer patients.

39 Because medical students generally receive very little instruction
40 regarding lymphedema, physicians may not discuss the risk of
41 lymphedema with their patients who are facing treatment for cancer,
42 and lymphedema is often misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed. In light
43 of the severe physical, psychological, and financial impact of
44 lymphedema on individuals and society, it is incumbent upon the
45 State to recognize and support the courageous individuals living
46 with this debilitating condition, and the tireless advocates who work
47 to increase lymphedema awareness among healthcare providers and
48 the public.