

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2014 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious health concerns that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2014 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with National Spina Bifida Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Every day, approximately eight babies are born with Spina Bifida, making it the most commonly occurring, permanently disabling birth defect in the nation; literally, it is translated as "split spine"; and

WHEREAS, Today, nearly 166,000 men, women and children in the United States are living with Spina Bifida, which occurs when a baby's spinal column fails to close properly during fetal development; and

WHEREAS, It is not known for sure what causes Spina Bifida; scientists believe genetic and environmental factors act together to cause the condition; and

WHEREAS, The different types of Spina Bifida include: Occult Spinal Dysraphism (OSD); Spina Bifida Occulta; Meningocele; and Myelomeningocele (Meningomyelocele), also called Spina Bifida Cystica; and

WHEREAS, A child with Meningomyelocele is commonly operated on within two to three days of birth; this prevents infections and helps save the spinal cord from more damage; and

WHEREAS, A child with OSD should see a surgeon; most experts believe surgery is needed early to keep nerves and the brain from becoming more damaged as the child grows; and

WHEREAS, Women who are old enough to have babies should take folic acid before and during the first three months of pregnancy in an effort to prevent Spina Bifida; because half of the pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, the Spina Bifida Association asks women to take a vitamin with 400 mcg (0.4 mg) of folic acid each day during the years of their lives when they are possibly able to have children; and

WHEREAS, Folic acid is a vitamin the body needs to grow and be healthy; it is found in many foods, but the man-made or synthetic form in pills is actually better absorbed by our bodies; and

WHEREAS, Children and young adults with Spina Bifida can have mental and social problems; they can also have problems with walking and getting around or going to the bathroom, latex allergy, obesity, skin breakdown, gastrointestinal disorders, learning disabilities, depression, tendonitis and sexual issues; and

WHEREAS, People with Spina Bifida must learn how to get around on their own without help, by using crutches, braces or wheelchairs; with help, it is also possible for children to learn how to go to the bathroom on their own; and

WHEREAS, Doctors, nurses, teachers and parents should know what a child can and cannot do so they can help the child, within the limits of safety and health, be independent, play with kids that are not disabled and take care of themselves; and

WHEREAS, There are three known tests that can be done to help detect Spina Bifida before birth; a blood test during the 16th to 18th weeks of pregnancy called the alpha-fetoprotein (AFP screening test); an ultrasound of the fetus which is also called a sonogram and can show signs of

Spina Bifida such as the open spine; and a maternal amniocentesis test

where a small amount of the fluid from the womb is taken through a thin needle to look at protein levels; and

WHEREAS, With help, children with Spina Bifida can grow up and live full lives; most do well in school, and many play in sports; and

WHEREAS, Because of today's medicine, approximately 90 percent of babies born with Spina Bifida now live to be adults, about 80 percent have normal intelligence, and roughly 75 percent play sports and participate in other fun activities; and

WHEREAS, As type and level of severity differ among people with Spina Bifida, each person with the condition faces different challenges and may require different treatments; and

WHEREAS, The best way to manage Spina Bifida is with a team approach which includes neurosurgeons, urologists, orthopedists, physical and occupational therapists, orthotists, psychologists and medical social workers; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize individuals, and their families in New York State who live with this very common, but little known birth defect; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the committed people associated with The Spina Bifida Association of Greater Rochester should be commended for their vital work and steadfast dedication; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health concern, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2014 as Spina Bifida Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.