Senate Resolution No. 1427

BY: Senator PARKER

RECOGNIZING June 2026, as Scleroderma Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the importance of health awareness campaigns that educate the public, advance understanding of disease, support affected individuals and families, and foster research for improved diagnosis, treatment, and, ultimately, cures; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize June 2026, as Scleroderma Awareness Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, June is designated as Scleroderma Awareness Month, a time when advocates, healthcare providers, researchers, patients, caregivers, and communities across the Nation unite to elevate awareness about scleroderma, a rare autoimmune condition characterized by abnormal connective tissue growth that can affect the skin, blood vessels, and internal organs; and

WHEREAS, Scleroderma encompasses a group of related disorders, including localized forms that affect mainly the skin and systemic sclerosis that can affect internal organs, each involving immune system dysfunction, fibrosis, vascular abnormalities, and serious complications such as pulmonary hypertension and interstitial lung disease; and

WHEREAS, Scleroderma's clinical presentation is varied, and its diagnosis can be challenging because symptoms overlap with other conditions; there is currently no known cure for scleroderma, and management focuses on symptom control, organ protection, and supportive care; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, more than 300,000 people live with a form of scleroderma, and the disease can affect individuals of all ages, genders, and backgrounds; awareness and early intervention are critical to improving quality of life and clinical outcomes for those affected; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that scleroderma disproportionately affects Black individuals in ways that result in more severe disease symptoms and poorer outcomes, including earlier age of onset, a higher frequency of the diffuse cutaneous form of systemic sclerosis, increased risk of organ involvement, and higher mortality rates when compared to white populations; this discrepancy warrants continued research, outreach, and culturally competent care; and

WHEREAS, Awareness efforts during Scleroderma Awareness Month include national and local campaigns, educational programming, support group activities, community events, support services for patients and

families, and opportunities for public acknowledgment such as proclamations, teal awareness lighting initiatives, and community dialogues; and

WHEREAS, The National Scleroderma Foundation serves as a leading force in raising awareness, providing education and support to individuals and families, advocating for improved care, and fostering a nationwide network of support groups, including a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) scleroderma support group to address community-specific needs and experiences; and

WHEREAS, The Scleroderma Research Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to funding and advancing high-quality scientific research on scleroderma with the goal of discovering better treatments and ultimately a cure, supporting clinical study initiatives and collaboration among top researchers and institutions; and

WHEREAS, During Scleroderma Awareness Month, communities are encouraged to learn more about this rare autoimmune disease, to support individuals living with scleroderma, to participate in awareness and fundraising activities, and to promote equitable access to clinical care, education, and research opportunities for all, particularly populations that have experienced disproportionate disease burden; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body recognizes June 2026, as Scleroderma Awareness Month in the State of New York and reaffirms its commitment to raising public awareness about scleroderma, supporting affected individuals and families, advancing research and education, and addressing health disparities that affect Black and Brown communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the National Scleroderma Foundation and the Scleroderma Research Foundation in recognition of their leadership and service in support of the scleroderma community.