

BY: Senator RIVERA

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2022, as Multiple Sclerosis 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 illnesses 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, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2022, as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, New Yorkers place the highest priority on health-related issues, including the various forms of auto-immune and neurological conditions striking people of all ages, and one of the most prevalent is Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which the National MS Society estimates affects nearly one million Americans, with an estimated 200 new cases diagnosed each week, or one person every hour of the day; and

WHEREAS, MS affects the Central Nervous System (CNS), and those who suffer from it have damage done to myelin in the CNS due to overactive immune cells which cause inflammation; over time, lesions caused by MS harden into scar tissue, or sclerosis, and may develop at multiple points in the CNS; this phenomenon is where the disease's name, Multiple Sclerosis, is derived; and

WHEREAS, Due to the complexity of the CNS, the disease can cause a wide range of different symptoms and currently, there are more than 50 recognized symptoms that range from mild to life-altering, making it impossible to predict which symptoms any one individual may experience; and

WHEREAS, While there are a variety of treatments available to slow the progress of MS, there are no treatments that can stop or reverse the damage caused by the disease; early damage to the CNS can occur even before an individual experiences symptoms, therefore, the best chances to reduce long-term disability is during the early phase of the disease; currently, most people with MS have a normal or near normal life expectancy; and

WHEREAS, MS is more common in women and appears more frequently in Caucasian women than Hispanic, Asian, or African American women; two to three times more women are diagnosed with the disease than men; and

WHEREAS, While MS is not considered an inherited disorder, there may be genetic predispositions to the disease; if you have a parent or sibling diagnosed with MS, your chance to also have the condition is raised to 2.5 percent, and a person with an identical twin who is diagnosed with MS have a 25 percent chance of also developing it; and

WHEREAS, MS is the second most costly chronic condition to manage; the average cost of disease modifying therapies in the United States is approximately \$60,000 per year, and the total cost per person with MS is estimated to be \$4.1 million; and

WHEREAS, A number of non-profit health organizations, such as the New York City-Southern New York, Long Island and Upstate New York Chapters of the National MS Society, are dedicated to the ultimate goal of eradicating Multiple Sclerosis and to serving those currently living with the disease; and

WHEREAS, The National MS Society is steadfast in its efforts to find cures for the disease through medical research, voluntary contributions and public support; in New York State, the Society serves over 34,000 people living with MS by maintaining offices in Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Westchester County, Long Island and New York City to carry out its compassionate work on behalf of individuals with the disease and to assist their family members; and

WHEREAS, Today, of the nearly one million Americans diagnosed with MS, most are between 20 and 50 years of age, making it the number one disabling condition among young adults, and New York State is committed to eliminating all auto-immune and neurological conditions, supporting further medical research, and making quality medical treatment more available; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing that good health is key to a long, productive and fulfilling life, this Legislative Body encourages private efforts to advance research and education programs that address MS, and supports observances that raise public awareness concerning such critical health matters as Multiple Sclerosis, with hopes of eliminating all forms of this devastating disease; and

WHEREAS, Many New Yorkers have been diagnosed with this debilitating disease; this Legislative Body recognizes the vital importance of the National MS Society in providing excellence in care through awareness, education and treatment, and its evident commitment to this mission; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2022, as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and the New York City-Southern New York, Long Island and Upstate New York Chapters of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.