Assembly Resolution No. 263

BY: M. of A. Joyner

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Oral Cancer 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 April 2023, as Oral Cancer Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Oral Cancer Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Oral cancer is any cancerous tissue growth located in the oral cavity (the mouth), on the lip, and the oropharynx (the part of the throat at the back of the mouth); and

WHEREAS, Oral cancer most commonly involves the tongue, the floor of the mouth, the lip, and the minor salivary glands; and

WHEREAS, Most oral cancers look very similar under the microscope and are called "squamous cell" carcinomas which are malignant and tend to spread rapidly; and

WHEREAS, While smoking and tobacco use are still major risk factors, the fastest growing segment of oral cancer patients in young, healthy, nonsmoking individuals is exposure to the HPV-16 virus (human papilloma virus), the same virus which is responsible for the majority of cervical cancers in women; and

WHEREAS, From a gender perspective, for decades oral cancer affected six men for every woman; that ratio has now become two men to every woman; and

WHEREAS, While published studies do not exist to draw finite conclusions, it is understood that this increase is due to lifestyle changes, primarily the increased number of women smokers over the last few decades; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, oral cancer occurs twice as often in the African-American population as in Caucasians, and survival statistics for African-Americans over five years are also poorer at 33%, versus 55% for Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, Oral cancer frequently has no symptoms; however, when symptoms do occur, the most common include a sore or ulcer on the lip or in the mouth that does not heal; a lump on the lip, in the mouth, or in the neck; a white or red patch on the gums, tongue, or lining of the mouth; unusual bleeding, pain, or numbness in the mouth; oral pain that

does not go away; difficulty or pain with chewing, swallowing, or jaw opening; swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or to become uncomfortable; tooth loosening; bad breath; sensory loss in the face; abnormal taste in the mouth; or tongue problems; and

WHEREAS, When detected early, oral cancer patients have an 80 to 90 percent survival rate; and

WHEREAS, Oral cancer screening should be a routine part of every annual dental examination; regular check-ups, including an examination of the entire mouth, are essential in the early detection of cancerous and pre-cancerous conditions; an individual may have a very small, but dangerous, oral spot or sore and not be aware of it; when abnormal tissue or cancer is found early, it may be easier to treat; and

WHEREAS, According to the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), anyone over the age of 17 should get an annual screening for oral cancer and anyone with a history of oral cancer should have a screening every six months; and

WHEREAS, The health and well-being of the people of the State of New York is of paramount importance to this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, The observance of Oral Cancer Awareness Month provides an opportunity to focus on this significant and complex medical condition, to provide information on and raise public awareness and understanding of its causes, effects, and treatments, and to highlight its importance to citizens of the State of New York of all ages; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Oral Cancer 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 Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.