

BY: Senator PERSAUD

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 2026, as Blood 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, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 2026, as Blood Cancer Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Blood Cancer Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, During September, National Blood Cancer Awareness Month sheds light on the cancers that affect the blood and lymphatic systems; and

WHEREAS, This vital observance focuses its attention on all blood cancers-including, but not limited to, leukemia (including chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)), lymphoma, Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes, and other related hematologic malignancies-by raising awareness, the goal is to inform the public about the causes of blood cancers, how to identify symptoms, available treatments, and progress made through research;

WHEREAS, CLL, the most common adult leukemia, is a chronic and often incurable disease requiring ongoing management, with patients facing unique challenges including active surveillance, risk of infection, and long-term care needs; and

WHEREAS, While advances in targeted therapies have improved outcomes for individuals with CLL, disparities in access to innovative treatments, specialized care, and clinical trials persist, underscoring the need for continued research and high-quality, accessible care for all patients; and

WHEREAS, Blood cancers affect white blood cells and, in some cases, red blood cells or platelets; and, while no widely recommended screening tests currently exist, awareness of symptoms and risk factors is critical to understanding when to seek medical evaluation; and

WHEREAS, Symptoms of blood cancer include: lymph node swelling, persistent fatigue, night sweats, fever, difficulty catching breath and/or unexplained weight loss; and

WHEREAS, Risk factors for blood cancers include family history, certain genetic disorders, smoking, exposure to radiation or prior chemotherapy, immune system dysfunction or immunosuppression (including in individuals with HIV or those receiving immunosuppressive therapy),

and infection with viruses such as Epstein-Barr; and

WHEREAS, Significant advances in the treatment of blood cancers-including leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, and other hematologic malignancies-have led to innovative therapies such as cellular immunotherapies (including CAR-T), bispecific antibodies, antibody-drug conjugates, and targeted precision medicines, resulting in improved survival rates and quality of life for patients; and

WHEREAS, All targeted therapies for blood cancers are not interchangeable, as they differ in mechanism, efficacy, and suitability for individual patients, and therefore treatment decisions must be guided by the judgment of physicians to ensure that each patient receives the therapy best aligned with their specific diagnosis, disease subtype, overall health, and clinical needs; and

WHEREAS, There remains a strong and expanding pipeline of potential therapies for blood cancers, with hundreds of new treatments currently in development worldwide, reflecting one of the most active areas of cancer research and offering continued hope for more effective, less toxic, and potentially curative options in the future; and

WHEREAS, Although the leukemia survival rate has quadrupled since 1960, in the United States, approximately 16,000 people are diagnosed with blood cancers every month; depending on the type of cancer, the survival rate varies; and

WHEREAS, Hodgkin's lymphoma, for example, has a much higher survival rate and is diagnosed less often; conversely, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma will be diagnosed more often and will have a lower expectation of survival; and

WHEREAS, Even though survival rates continue to improve, someone in the United States dies from a blood cancer every nine minutes; in the United States, nearly 10% of the people who die from cancer, die from blood cancer; and

WHEREAS, Awareness and education are powerful tools in the race to find a cure for blood cancers; and

WHEREAS, The health and vitality of the people of New York are significantly enhanced by local efforts to increase communication and education pertaining to blood cancers; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health issue, 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 Kathy Hochul to proclaim September 2026, as Blood 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 and Blood Cancer United.