

**BY:** M. of A. Walsh

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026 as Autoimmune Awareness Month in the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** The State of New York takes great pride in recognizing serious disorders by proclaiming official months to increase awareness of such concerns, which affect thousands of New Yorkers; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026 as Autoimmune Awareness Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Autoimmune Awareness Month; and

**WHEREAS,** Researchers have identified the category of autoimmune diseases includes more than 140 diseases that are chronic and in many cases debilitating-with no known cures; and

**WHEREAS,** Autoimmune diseases can affect any part of the body, including the blood, blood vessels, muscles, nervous system, gastrointestinal tract, endocrine glands, and multiple-organ systems, and can be life-threatening; and

**WHEREAS,** Researchers have identified a close genetic relationship and a common pathway of disease that exists among autoimmune diseases, explaining the clustering of autoimmune diseases in individuals and families; and

**WHEREAS,** The family of autoimmune diseases is under-recognized, and poses a major health care challenge to the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that autoimmune diseases afflict up to 50,000,000 people in the United States, 80 percent of the people affected are women, and the prevalence of autoimmune diseases is rising; and

**WHEREAS,** NIH estimates the annual direct health care costs associated with autoimmune diseases at more than \$100,780,000,000 and there are an estimated 250,000 new diagnoses each year; and

**WHEREAS,** Autoimmune diseases are among the top 10 leading causes of death in women under 65; and

**WHEREAS,** Autoimmune diseases frequently affects children and young adults, leading to a lifetime of disability; and

**WHEREAS,** Diagnostic tests for most autoimmune diseases are not standardized, making autoimmune diseases very difficult to diagnose; and

**WHEREAS,** Because autoimmune diseases are difficult to diagnose, treatment is often delayed, sometimes resulting in irreparable damage

and unnecessary suffering; early diagnosis and treatment is critical;  
and

**WHEREAS,** The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies reported that the United States is behind other countries in research into immune system self-recognition, the cause of autoimmune diseases;  
and

**WHEREAS,** A study by the Autoimmune Association revealed that it takes the average patient with an autoimmune disease more than 4.5 years, and costs more than \$50,000, to get a correct diagnosis; and

**WHEREAS,** There is a significant need for more collaboration and cross-fertilization of basic autoimmune research; and

**WHEREAS,** There is a significant need for research focusing on the etiology of all autoimmune-related diseases, to increase understanding of the root causes of these diseases rather than treating the symptoms after the disease has had its destructive effect; and

**WHEREAS,** The National Coalition of Autoimmune Patient Groups is a coalition of national organizations focused on autoimmune diseases working to consolidate the voices of patients with autoimmune diseases and to promote increased education, awareness, and research into all aspects of autoimmune diseases through a collaborative approach; and

**WHEREAS,** Designating March as Autoimmune Awareness Month helps educate the public about autoimmune diseases and the need for research funding, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatments; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim March 2026 as Autoimmune 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 members of the Autoimmune Association.