

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 86

Designating September, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2020
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2020

WHEREAS, ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths in women in Virginia, accounting for more deaths than any other gynecologic cancer; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there were 2,639 new cases of ovarian cancer reported in Virginia from 2012 to 2016—11 cases for every 100,000 women; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, there were 1,810 women in Virginia who died of ovarian cancer during that period—seven out of every 100,000 women; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society estimates that 570 cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed in Virginia in 2019 and 360 people will die from the disease; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, a woman's lifetime risk of being diagnosed with ovarian cancer is about one in 78; and

WHEREAS, the five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer is 46.5 percent and survival rates vary greatly depending on the stage of diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, for women diagnosed in early stages, the five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer increases to more than 90 percent; and

WHEREAS, while the mammogram can detect breast cancer and the Pap smear can detect cervical cancer, there is no reliable early detection test for ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, many people are unaware that the symptoms of ovarian cancer often include bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, urinary symptoms, and other symptoms that are easily confused with other diseases; and

WHEREAS, the lack of an early detection test for ovarian cancer combined with its vague symptoms mean that approximately 80 percent of cases of ovarian cancer are detected at an advanced stage; and

WHEREAS, all women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but approximately 20 percent of women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer have a hereditary predisposition to develop ovarian cancer, which places them at even higher risk; and

WHEREAS, scientists and physicians have uncovered changes in the BRCA genes that some women inherit from their parents, which may make those women 30 times more likely to develop ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, the family history of a woman has been found to play an important role in the accurate assessment of the risk of developing ovarian cancer, and medical experts believe that family history should be taken into consideration during the annual wellness visit of any woman; and

WHEREAS, many experts in health prevention now recommend genetic testing for young women with a family history of breast and ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, women who know that they are at high risk of breast and ovarian cancer may undertake prophylactic measures to help reduce the risk of developing those diseases; and

WHEREAS, guidelines issued by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and Society of Gynecologic Oncology recommend that all women diagnosed with ovarian cancer receive counseling and genetic testing regardless of their family history; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2016 consensus report by the National Academy of Medicine, "there remain surprising gaps in the fundamental knowledge about and understanding of ovarian cancer"; and

WHEREAS, ongoing investments in ovarian cancer research and education and awareness efforts are critical to closing these gaps and improving survivorship for women with ovarian cancer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate September, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the American Cancer Society in Virginia so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.