

Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Bettye Davis

SCR1 -27-LS0099\M - "Designating May 2011 as Lupus Awareness Month"

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SCR1 designates May 2011 as Lupus Awareness Month and encourages Alaskans to observe Lupus Awareness Month with appropriate activities that provide both lupus education and support for people diagnosed with the disease.

According to the Lupus Foundation of America, lupus is an acute, chronic and often lifelong disease affecting the immune system by causing inflammation and tissue damage. Major gaps exist in the understanding of the causes and consequences of lupus. Lupus can affect any body part, including the skin, lungs, heart, kidney, and brain. Lupus can cause seizures, strokes, heart attacks, miscarriages and organ failure. Lupus strikes mostly women of childbearing age and women of color develop lupus at a rate two-to-three times the rate that Caucasians develop lupus. Lupus is difficult to diagnose because its symptoms are similar to the symptoms of other illnesses. New drugs have not been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration specifically for lupus during the last 50 years. Current treatment for lupus can have damaging side effects.

Each year, May is designated as Lupus Awareness Month to show support for the estimated 1.5 million Americans with lupus. More than 3,000 cases of lupus have been diagnosed in Alaska in patients 20 to 87 years of age. Ten members of the Lupus Foundation of America, Alaska Chapter recently passed away from lupus. Designating May 2011 as Lupus Awareness Month will help increase awareness of lupus and show support for those diagnosed with the disease.
