

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

1992

Source
HCS SCR 29(STA)

Legislative
Resolve No.
60



Designating April 19 - 25, 1992, as "Bone Marrow Donor Week"; and requesting the governor to proclaim an annual "Bone Marrow Donor Week."

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS many Alaskans and thousands of people throughout the world suffer from leukemia and other blood-related diseases and cannot survive without a bone marrow transplant; and

WHEREAS recent advances in bone marrow transplants now give people dying of blood-related diseases hope to be cured if a donor can be found whose bone marrow matches their own; and

WHEREAS 70 percent of the individuals needing a bone marrow transplant lack a qualified donor within their own families and must find an unrelated donor whose bone marrow perfectly matches their own to provide the life-saving marrow; and

WHEREAS the chances of finding a suitable unrelated bone marrow donor is between one in 20,000 and one in 1,000,000, depending on the patient's genetic make-up; and

WHEREAS there is a national bone marrow donor registry, established in 1987, to assist people in finding a suitable donor from a pool of 470,000 "typed" volunteers ready and

willing to donate their life-giving marrow; and

WHEREAS there is an urgent, nationwide need to increase the pool to 1,000,000 available marrow donors of all ethnic backgrounds to increase the chance of finding a suitable donor for the 10,000 people who are currently awaiting a bone marrow transplant throughout the United States and who will die without a bone marrow transplant; and

WHEREAS thousands of people have already died for lack of a suitable marrow donor and this same grim prospect faces many other patients and their families throughout Alaska; and

WHEREAS the procedure for initial compatibility testing is considered completely safe and virtually painless, requiring only two tablespoons of blood; and

WHEREAS Alaska currently has over 4,100 potential donors in the National Registry; and

WHEREAS in 1991, despite the staggering odds, Alaskan donors provided six bone marrow matches, and three were provided for Alaskans requiring the marrow transplant through reciprocal nationwide efforts through the National Bone Marrow Donor Program; and

WHEREAS the Blood Bank of Alaska has conducted successful bone marrow drives in Anchorage, Juneau, Eagle River, Wasilla, Palmer, Fairbanks, McGrath, Kenai, Soldotna, and Hoonah with drives scheduled for Kodiak and Dutch Harbor; and

WHEREAS, coupled with the aid of a special appropriation for type testing, numerous service organizations throughout the state, spearheaded by the Eagle River Lions and Lionesses, have provided countless hours in raising necessary funds and volunteering thousands of hours to conduct the drives throughout Alaska and the ongoing efforts in Anchorage and Eagle River; and

WHEREAS in 1991 over 3,500 additional Alaskans were enrolled in the National Bone Marrow Registry as a result of these efforts; and

WHEREAS a special outreach also helped enroll 126 Alaska Natives who were seriously underrepresented in the National Registry and, as a result, were unlikely to find a successful match; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to continue to promote a greater awareness of the need for healthy bone marrow donors and to encourage more Alaskans to step forward to be typed

and enrolled in the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry so that the pool is as large and diverse as possible; and

WHEREAS with these initial efforts a minimum of one percent of Alaska's total population will be enrolled in the Bone Marrow Donor Program;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State-Legislature designates the week of April 19 - 25, 1992, as "Bone Marrow Donor Week"; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature respectfully requests the governor to proclaim a "Bone Marrow Donor Week" during an appropriate time period each year, setting the dates to correspond with a nationally recognized week if there is one; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature encourages the commissioners of the state departments, with the commissioner of health and social services taking the lead, to work in cooperation with the Blood Bank of Alaska, Inc., to make continuing efforts to educate and inform state employees and other Alaskans about the bone marrow donor program through newsletters, check stubs, and other appropriate forms of communication.