

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 168

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 22, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman YVONNE LOPEZ

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Designates September 21 of each year as “Amoeba Awareness Day” in NJ.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating September 21 of each year as
2 “Amoeba Awareness Day” in New Jersey.

3
4 **WHEREAS**, *Naegleria fowleri*, commonly referred to as the “brain-
5 eating amoeba,” is a free-living microscopic amoeba often found in
6 soil and warm fresh water such as lakes, rivers, and hot springs; and

7 **WHEREAS**, *Naegleria fowleri* usually infects people when
8 contaminated water enters the body through the nose and travels to
9 the brain where it causes a rare, devastating infection of the brain
10 called primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM); and

11 **WHEREAS**, This infection usually occurs when people go swimming or
12 diving in warm freshwater bodies of water, like lakes and rivers and
13 can also occur when contaminated water from other sources, such
14 as inadequately chlorinated swimming pool water or heated and
15 contaminated tap water enters the nose; and

16 **WHEREAS**, The fatality rate for a person infected with *Naegleria*
17 *fowleri* is over 97 percent and only four people out of 143 known
18 infected individuals in the United States from 1962 to 2017 have
19 survived the infection, three of whom were treated with a new drug
20 called miltefosine after being infected; and

21 **WHEREAS**, One example of these tragic fatalities is Fabrizio Stabile of
22 Ventnor, New Jersey, who, on September 21, 2018, at age 29, died
23 of PAM after a visit to the wave pool of a Central Texas resort; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Recreational water users should assume that *Naegleria*
25 *fowleri* is present in warm fresh water across the United States,
26 including the many freshwater lakes and rivers in New Jersey; and

27 **WHEREAS**, There are no rapid, standardized testing methods to detect
28 and quantitate *Naegleria fowleri* in water; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Citizens of New Jersey can reduce the risk of *Naegleria*
30 *fowleri* infection by avoiding submerging their heads under water or
31 engaging in other water-related activities that cause water to go up
32 the nose; and

33 **WHEREAS**, While the outlook for people who are infected with
34 *Naegleria fowleri* is poor, early diagnosis and new treatments,
35 such as miltefosine, can increase the chances for survival; now,
36 therefore,

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38 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the
39 State of New Jersey:

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41 1. September 21 of each year is designated as “Amoeba
42 Awareness Day” to raise awareness of the presence of *Naegleria*
43 *fowleri* in freshwater bodies of water and the steps citizens can take
44 to avoid *Naegleria fowleri* infection.

45
46 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to issue a
47 proclamation recognizing September 21 as “Amoeba Awareness

1 Day” and calling upon public officials and the residents of New
2 Jersey to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

3
4 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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7 STATEMENT

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9 This joint resolution designates September 21 of each year as
10 “Amoeba Awareness Day” in New Jersey to raise awareness of the
11 presence of *Naegleria fowleri*, commonly referred to as the “brain-
12 eating amoeba,” in freshwater bodies of water and the steps the
13 public can take to avoid *Naegleria fowleri* infection. After
14 symptoms begin, the infection progresses rapidly and usually causes
15 death within five days.

16 On September 21, 2018, Ventor, New Jersey resident Fabrizio
17 Stabile died at age 29 after a visit to a wave pool at a Central Texas
18 resort. Mr. Stabile came down with a sudden severe headache while
19 mowing his lawn on September 16. His condition worsened the next
20 day and when his mother went to check on him he could not move
21 or speak coherently and was rushed to an area hospital. Mr. Stabile
22 tested positive for *Naegleria fowleri* on September 20, the day
23 before he died.

24 Although most infections caused by *Naegleria fowleri* have been
25 fatal, there have been four well-documented survivors in the United
26 States. Three of the survivors were treated with a new drug called
27 miltefosine after being infected. Public awareness of this rare
28 amoeba and its symptoms can increase the likelihood of survival by
29 identifying the symptoms and getting treatment quickly.