

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 95

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 12, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblywoman Downey, Assemblymen Houghtaling, Rooney, Verrelli,
Assemblywoman Timberlake, Assemblymen Space and Wirths**

SYNOPSIS

Permanently designates October 6 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2019)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** permanently designating October 6 as
2 “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Opioids are commonly prescribed for pain, and an
5 estimated 20 percent of patients presenting to physician offices with
6 non-cancer pain symptoms, pain-related diagnoses, or acute and
7 chronic pain receive an opioid prescription; and
8 **WHEREAS**, In 2012, health care providers wrote 259 million
9 prescriptions for opioid pain medication, enough for every adult in
10 the United States to have a bottle of pain medication pills; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Although evidence supports the short-term efficacy of
12 opioids for reducing pain, few studies have been conducted to
13 assess the long-term benefits of opioids for chronic pain; and
14 **WHEREAS**, Despite the benefits of opioid pain medication, opioid use
15 presents serious risks, including the risk of opioid overdose, misuse,
16 and abuse; and
17 **WHEREAS**, According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and
18 Prevention, the abuse of prescription painkillers is a “growing,
19 deadly epidemic”; and
20 **WHEREAS**, Since 1990, drug overdose death rates in the United States
21 have more than tripled, with nearly three-fourths of these deaths
22 attributable to prescription painkillers; and
23 **WHEREAS**, The unprecedented rise in overdose deaths in the U.S.
24 parallels a nearly 300 percent increase in the sale of opioid pain
25 medications, such as Oxycodone and Percocet, since 1999; and
26 **WHEREAS**, The chemical structure of opioids mimic the structure of
27 receptors in the brain and the nervous system; and
28 **WHEREAS**, This chemical “relationship” allows prescription pain
29 relievers to work by binding to receptors in the brain and decreasing
30 the perception of pain, thereby creating a powerful feeling of
31 euphoria, physical dependence, and in some cases, addiction; and
32 **WHEREAS**, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
33 Administration reports that many people who become addicted to
34 opioids go on to abuse heroin, a semi-synthetic opioid drug; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Ninety-four percent of respondents in a 2014 survey of
36 people in treatment for opioid addiction reported they chose to use
37 heroin because prescription opioids were far more expensive to
38 purchase and harder to obtain than heroin on the illegal drug
39 market; and
40 **WHEREAS**, Of the 21.5 million Americans that had a substance abuse
41 disorder in 2014, 1.9 million abused opioid pain medication and
42 586,000 had a substance abuse disorder involving heroin; and
43 **WHEREAS**, The abuse of prescription painkillers in New Jersey has led
44 to a resurgence in the availability of cheap heroin in the State’s
45 urban, suburban, and rural areas; and
46 **WHEREAS**, In 2014, according to data released by the Division of
47 Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety, there

1 were 741 heroin related overdose deaths in New Jersey, twice as
2 many as in 2010; and

3 **WHEREAS**, As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and
4 Prevention, New Jersey’s per capita rate of 8.3 heroin related deaths
5 per 100,000 is more than triple the national rate; and

6 **WHEREAS**, In 2014, 28,332 people entered New Jersey drug addiction
7 treatment centers for heroin or opioid pill addictions, representing
8 nearly half the overall total of 64,766 people who received
9 substance abuse treatment in the State that year; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Heroin overdose has eclipsed homicide, suicide, car
11 accidents, and HIV/AIDS as one of the leading causes of death in
12 the State of New Jersey; and

13 **WHEREAS**, The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, in
14 cooperation with the Community Coalition for a Safe and Healthy
15 Morris, the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse,
16 and the Department of Human Services, has designated October 6,
17 2016 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey; and

18 **WHEREAS**, “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” is designed to raise
19 awareness about the dangers of, and the link between, opioid abuse
20 and heroin addiction and to educate health care providers,
21 community leaders, State lawmakers, and members of the public
22 about the opioid abuse epidemic and its effects throughout the State
23 of New Jersey and across the country; and

24 **WHEREAS**, In order to improve public awareness of the dangers of
25 opioid addiction and the link between opioid addiction and heroin
26 use, it is both reasonable and appropriate to invite New Jersey
27 citizens to observe “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in this State,
28 and to participate in appropriate activities in relation thereto; now,
29 therefore,

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31 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
32 *State of New Jersey:*

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34 1. October 6 shall be permanently designated as “Knock Out
35 Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey in order to raise awareness about
36 the dangers of, and the link between, opioid abuse and heroin
37 addiction and to educate health care providers, community leaders,
38 State lawmakers, and members of the public about the opioid abuse
39 epidemic and its effects throughout the State of New Jersey and
40 across the country.

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42 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
43 proclamation recognizing October 6 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse
44 Day” in New Jersey, and calling upon public officials and the
45 citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities
46 and programs.

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48 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This resolution permanently designates October 6 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in order to raise awareness about the dangers of, and the link between, opioid abuse and heroin addiction and to educate health care providers, community leaders, State lawmakers, and members of the public about the opioid abuse epidemic and its effects throughout the State and across the country.

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Under the joint resolution, the Governor is requested to issue an annual proclamation recognizing October 6 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey and call upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.