

# 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,

30  
31 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*  
32 *State of New Jersey:*

33  
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.