

P.L. 2019, Joint Resolution No. 16, *approved July 15, 2019*  
Senate Joint Resolution No. 35

1   **A JOINT RESOLUTION** permanently designating October 6 as  
2   “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey.  
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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

1   **WHEREAS**, The abuse of prescription painkillers in New Jersey has led  
2       to a resurgence in the availability of cheap heroin in the State’s  
3       urban, suburban, and rural areas; and  
4   **WHEREAS**, In 2014, according to data released by the Division of  
5       Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety, there  
6       were 741 heroin related overdose deaths in New Jersey, twice as  
7       many as in 2010; and  
8   **WHEREAS**, As reported by the Centers for Disease Control and  
9       Prevention, New Jersey’s per capita rate of 8.3 heroin related deaths  
10      per 100,000 is more than triple the national rate; and  
11   **WHEREAS**, In 2014, 28,332 people entered New Jersey drug addiction  
12      treatment centers for heroin or opioid pill addictions, representing  
13      nearly half the overall total of 64,766 people who received  
14      substance abuse treatment in the State that year; and  
15   **WHEREAS**, Heroin overdose has eclipsed homicide, suicide, car  
16      accidents, and HIV/AIDS as one of the leading causes of death in  
17      the State of New Jersey; and  
18   **WHEREAS**, The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, in  
19      cooperation with the Community Coalition for a Safe and Healthy  
20      Morris, the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse,  
21      and the Department of Human Services, has designated October 6,  
22      2016 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in New Jersey; and  
23   **WHEREAS**, “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” is designed to raise  
24      awareness about the dangers of, and the link between, opioid abuse  
25      and heroin addiction and to educate health care providers,  
26      community leaders, State lawmakers, and members of the public  
27      about the opioid abuse epidemic and its effects throughout the State  
28      of New Jersey and across the country; and  
29   **WHEREAS**, In order to improve public awareness of the dangers of  
30      opioid addiction and the link between opioid addiction and heroin  
31      use, it is both reasonable and appropriate to invite New Jersey  
32      citizens to observe “Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day” in this State,  
33      and to participate in appropriate activities in relation thereto; now,  
34      therefore,

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36       **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*  
37       *State of New Jersey:*

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

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47       2.   The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a  
48       proclamation recognizing October 6 as “Knock Out Opioid Abuse

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1 Day” in New Jersey, and calling upon public officials and the  
2 citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities  
3 and programs.

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5 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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**STATEMENT**

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

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

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