

# ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 178

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 16, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER**

**District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblymen Armato, Rooney, Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttle, Dunn  
and Assemblyman Conaway**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates August 31 of each year “Overdose Awareness Day” in New Jersey.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/20/2020)

1   **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating August 31 of each year as  
2   “Overdose Awareness Day” in New Jersey.

3  
4   **WHEREAS**, Drug addiction is a chronic disease, characterized by  
5   compulsive or difficult to control drug use despite harmful  
6   consequences; and

7   **WHEREAS**, Drug addiction is seen by both the Centers for Disease  
8   Control and the World Health Organization as a fast-growing  
9   epidemic that can all too easily lead to overdose and death; and

10   **WHEREAS**, In 2018, 67,367 individuals died from drug overdoses in  
11   the United States; and

12   **WHEREAS**, In New Jersey alone, 2,900 people died from drug  
13   overdoses in 2018; and

14   **WHEREAS**, Furthermore, for every drug overdose that results in death,  
15   there are many more nonfatal overdoses, each taking an emotional  
16   and economic toll on the individual, their family, and the  
17   community at large; and

18   **WHEREAS**, Drug addiction can fuel feelings of shame, guilt,  
19   embarrassment, depression, and hopelessness, causing individuals  
20   to resist seeking treatment and support; and

21   **WHEREAS**, Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held on August  
22   31 of each year that aims to raise awareness of drug overdoses,  
23   reduce the stigma of a drug-related death, and to acknowledge the  
24   grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have died  
25   or had a permanent injury as a result of a drug overdose; and

26   **WHEREAS**, To further the goals of Overdose Awareness Day, all flags  
27   throughout the State should be flown at half-staff for the day’s  
28   duration; and

29   **WHEREAS**, Recognizing Overdose Awareness Day in New Jersey  
30   sends a strong message to former or current substance users,  
31   namely, that they are valued, and that overdose death is  
32   preventable; now, therefore,

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34    **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*  
35    *State of New Jersey:*

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37    1. August 31 of each year shall be designated as “Overdose  
38    Awareness Day” in New Jersey to raise awareness of overdose and  
39    reduce the stigma of a drug-related death.

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41    2. The Governor is respectfully requested to order flags be  
42    flown at half-staff and to issue a proclamation calling upon public  
43    officials and the citizens of this State to observe “Overdose  
44    Awareness Day” with appropriate activities and programs each  
45    year.

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47    3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This resolution designates August 31 of each year as “Overdose Awareness Day” in New Jersey.

Drug addiction is a chronic disease, characterized by compulsive or difficult to control drug use despite harmful consequences, and is seen by both the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization as a fast-growing epidemic that can all too easily lead to overdose and death. In 2018, 67,367 individuals died from drug overdoses in the United States, while in New Jersey alone that year, 2,900 people died from drug overdoses. Furthermore, for every drug overdose that results in death, there are many more nonfatal overdoses, each taking an emotional and economic toll on the individual, their family, and the community at large.

Drug addiction can fuel feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, depression, and hopelessness, which can cause individuals to resist seeking treatment and support. Overdose Awareness Day is a international event held on August 31 of each year that aims to raise awareness of drug overdoses, reduce the stigma of a drug-related death, and to acknowledge the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who have died or had a permanent injury as a result of a drug overdose. To further the goals of Overdose Awareness Day, all flags throughout the State should be flown at half-staff for the day’s duration. Recognizing Overdose Awareness Day in New Jersey sends a strong message to former or current substance users, namely, that they are valued, and that overdose death is preventable.