

Proclamation

by Governor Jim Justice

- Whereas,** each year, the Great State of West Virginia designates May as *Lupus Awareness Month* to show support and advocate for the residents living with lupus and the thousands more who care for them; and
- Whereas,** systemic lupus erythematosus (also known as lupus or SLE) is a chronic and debilitating autoimmune disease in which the immune system inexplicably and randomly attacks the body's own tissues and vital organs, including the kidneys, brain, heart, lungs, blood, skin, and joints. Lupus is the leading cause of premature cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and stroke among young women; and
- Whereas,** lupus directly affects millions worldwide; according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a conservative estimate suggests 322,000 Americans have definite or probable (undiagnosed) SLE. Lupus is two to three times more common with more severe symptoms among African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians than Caucasians. However, 90% of people who have lupus are women, typically diagnosed during childbearing years, ages 15-44; and
- Whereas,** lupus can be particularly difficult to diagnose because its symptoms are similar to those of many other illnesses, and major gaps exist in understanding the causes and consequences of lupus. Healthcare professionals are unaware of the symptoms and health effects of lupus, causing people with lupus to suffer for many years before obtaining a correct diagnosis and medical treatment. More than half of all people with lupus take four or more years and visit three or more doctors before obtaining a correct diagnosis; and
- Whereas,** there has been only one new drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration specifically for lupus in 56 years; current treatments for the disease can have damaging side effects. Demonstrating the need for increased aid for medical research efforts into lupus and the discovery of safer, more effective treatments for lupus patients. Research efforts are under-funded in contrast with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and
- Whereas,** most people with lupus have a difficult time maintaining willful employment and have no assistance other than the help of loved ones. Skyrocketing premiums for health insurance hinder lupus patients from affording basic medical necessities due to the inability to afford basic healthcare. The out-of-pocket yearly cost of a lupus patient can cause extreme financial hardships. The effect of lupus patients relying on a caregiver causes an unnecessary amount of stress and financial burdens to both the patient and the caregiver; and
- Whereas,** the Great State of West Virginia will work to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of lupus and to promote education, research, social support, and quality medical care for our citizens who live with, or care for, someone who struggle with this disease. This month, let us recommit ourselves to supporting the research that will lead to better, targeted, treatments and a cure for this devastating illness that affects so many, especially women, in the prime of their lives.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that I, Jim Justice, Governor of the Great State of West Virginia, do hereby proclaim *May 2024* as:

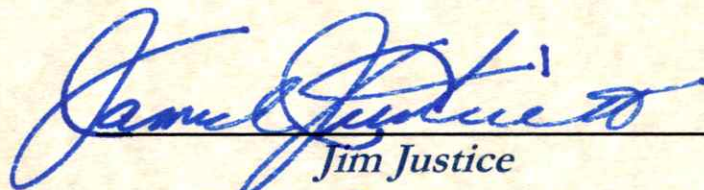
Lupus Awareness Month

in the Mountain State and encourage all citizens to join me in this observance.


In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.

Done at the Capitol, City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the First day of May, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Four, and in the One Hundred Sixty-First year of the State.




Jim Justice
Governor

By the Governor:


Mac Warner
Secretary of State