

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 271

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the support of Congress for activities to
increase public awareness of multiple sclerosis.

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Whereas multiple sclerosis is a chronic and often disabling disease of the central nervous system which often first appears in people between the ages of 20 and 40, with lifelong physical and emotional effects;

Whereas multiple sclerosis is twice as common in women as in men;

Whereas an estimated 250,000 to 350,000 individuals suffer from multiple sclerosis nationally;

Whereas symptoms of multiple sclerosis can be mild, such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision;

Whereas the progress, severity, and specific symptoms of multiple sclerosis in any one person cannot yet be predicted;

Whereas the annual cost to each affected individual averages \$34,000, and the total cost can exceed \$2 million over an individual's lifetime;

Whereas the annual cost of treating all people who suffer from multiple sclerosis in the United States is nearly \$9 billion;

Whereas the cause of multiple sclerosis remains unknown, but genetic factors are believed to play a role in determining a person's risk for developing multiple sclerosis;

Whereas many of the symptoms of multiple sclerosis can be treated with medications and rehabilitative therapy;

Whereas new treatments exist that can slow the course of the disease, and reduce its severity;

Whereas medical experts recommend that all people newly diagnosed with relapse-remitting multiple sclerosis begin disease-modifying therapy;

Whereas finding the genes responsible for susceptibility to multiple sclerosis may lead to the development of new and more effective ways to treat the disease;

Whereas increased funding for the National Institutes of Health would provide the opportunity for research and

the creation of programs to increase awareness, prevention, and education; and

Whereas Congress as an institution, and Members of Congress as individuals, are in unique positions to help raise public awareness about the detection and treatment of multiple sclerosis and to support the fight against multiple sclerosis: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

3 (1) all Americans should take an active role in
4 the fight to end the devastating effects of multiple
5 sclerosis on individuals, their families, and the econ-
6 omy;

7 (2) the role played by national and community
8 organizations and health care professionals in pro-
9 moting the importance of continued funding for re-
10 search, and in providing information about and ac-
11 cess to the best medical treatment and support serv-
12 ices for people with multiple sclerosis should be rec-
13 ognized and applauded;

14 (3) the Federal Government has a responsibility
15 to—

16 (A) continue to fund research so that the
17 causes of, and improved treatment for, multiple
18 sclerosis may be discovered;

1 (B) continue to consider ways to improve
2 access to, and the quality of, health care serv-
3 ices for people with multiple sclerosis;

4 (C) endeavor to raise public awareness
5 about the symptoms of multiple sclerosis; and

6 (D) endeavor to raise health professional's
7 awareness about diagnosis of multiple sclerosis
8 and the best course of treatment for people
9 with the disease.

Passed the House of Representatives October 19,
2000.

Attest:

Clerk.