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JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING PARKINSON'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, Parkinson's disease is a potentially devastating and immobilizing progressive disorder of the brain and spinal cord that causes paralysis, tremor, depression and isolation and is unpredictable in its outcome; and

WHEREAS, Parkinson's disease is estimated to occur in approximately 7,000 adults and in an unknown number of children in the State, and numerous care providers in the State shoulder the responsibility of caring for those affected; and

WHEREAS, in a typical week, a Parkinson's disease patient requires an estimated 7 care providers, making the number of people directly touched each week in the State by Parkinson's disease close to 50,000; and

WHEREAS, Parkinson's disease symptoms are neither clearly understood nor exactly quantifiable by either the medical community or the general public, which creates distress and danger in the lives of Parkinson's disease patients, especially those arriving at emergency rooms in the State's hospitals; and

WHEREAS, upon arrival at an emergency room, Parkinson's disease patients are often treated by medical personnel who are untrained in treating this disease, which causes inaccurate health assessments and leads to the use of inappropriate medications that may exacerbate the symptoms; and

WHEREAS, there are only two movement disorder neurologists in this State who specialize in Parkinson's disease, one in Scarborough and one in Westbrook, which makes access limited for prospective patients, and beyond these two physicians, there are insufficient treatments and no trained personnel at any level in the State; and

WHEREAS, in order to save lives, there is an urgent need to establish and fund a plan regarding Parkinson's disease to train and educate emergency room personnel, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, other public safety workers, emergency medical services' personnel, boat and shipping captains, directors of transportation and supervisors of state parks and recreational areas; and

WHEREAS, there is a network of fifteen Parkinson's disease support groups statewide, located in Augusta, Waterville, Greater Bangor, Biddeford, the Blue Hill area, Bath, Brunswick, Cape Elizabeth, Camden, Greater Portland, Lewiston, Norway, Westbrook, Yarmouth and York, and 2 other groups, a younger onset group in Brunswick and a Parkinson's Plus group in South Portland; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association, the Maine Parkinson Society and the MaineHealth Learning Resource Center are all jointly established at a central resource at the Maine Medical Center campus in Falmouth, with satellite resources in all MaineHealth Learning Resource Center locations, including Norway, Scarborough, Falmouth, Portland and Maine Medical Center's East Tower; and

WHEREAS, April 11th is known globally as World Parkinson's Day, and April is Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to express our support for and commitment to all efforts being made by the Parkinson's disease community to close the gaps in funding, services, training, education and care that currently exist; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Maine Parkinson Society, the Maine Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association, the MaineHealth Learning Resource Center in Falmouth and the University of New England's Medical School, the College of Osteopathic Medicine.