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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 cause paralysis, tremor, depression and isolation and is unpredictable in its outcome; and

WHEREAS, Parkinson's disease is estimated to affect approximately 7,000 adults, an unknown number of children and numerous care providers in the State each day; and

WHEREAS, each Parkinson's disease patient requires, in a typical week, an estimated 7 caregivers, so that the number of people directly affected by Parkinson's disease is close to 50,000 each week in the State; and

WHEREAS, Parkinson's disease symptoms are neither understood nor clearly identified for either the medical community or the general public, creating distress and danger in the lives of Parkinson's patients, especially those who are arriving at emergency rooms in the State's hospitals; and

WHEREAS, upon arrival at an emergency room, Parkinson's patients are exposed to untrained medical personnel, causing inaccurate assessments; and

WHEREAS, there are just 2 movement disorder neurologists in this State specializing in Parkinson's disease, one in Scarborough and one in Westbrook, making access limited and causing treatment to be insufficient for prospective patients; and

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

WHEREAS, there exists a network of 15 Parkinson's 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 and satellite resources exist 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 Awareness Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Legislature now assembled in the First 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 Medical School.