



S.B. 257

126th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Sens. Fedor, Fingerhut, Clancy, Padgett, Goodman, Miller, Schuler, Schuring, Zurz, Dann, Gardner, Hagan, Roberts, Prentiss, Kearney, Brady, Wilson, Carey, Wachtmann, Amstutz, Austria

BILL SUMMARY

- Designates March as "Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month" in Ohio.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Background

Multiple sclerosis (MS), a non-contagious autoimmune disease, affects the body's central nervous system: the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. Specifically, multiple sclerosis affects myelin, a fatty tissue that surrounds and protects the nerve fibers of the central nervous system and also assists the nerves in conducting electrical impulses to and from the brain. In multiple sclerosis, myelin is destroyed or damaged in multiple locations, leaving scar tissue known as sclerosis. Symptoms produced by multiple sclerosis include bladder and bowel dysfunction, dizziness and vertigo, depression, emotional changes, fatigue, pain, sexual dysfunction, and loss of balance or coordination. Its cause is unknown.¹

According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, in 2005, approximately 400,000 Americans had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, with an estimated 200 new cases diagnosed each week. Most are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, although the disease does occur in both children and the elderly. Multiple sclerosis is more common among Caucasians than other ethnic groups, and two to three times more common in women than in men.

¹ "About MS: What is Multiple Sclerosis?" National Multiple Sclerosis Society, August 1, 2005. Available online at <http://www.nationalmssociety.org>, visited 1-27-2006.

While drug therapies have been developed to slow the progression of multiple sclerosis and alleviate its symptoms, there is no cure.²

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

(sec. 5.2232)

The bill designates the month of March as "Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month" to enhance understanding of the disease, including its causes and health effects, and to support and encourage education programs and research to develop effective therapies and find a cure for the disease.

Legislative intent

(Section 2)

Included in the bill is an uncodified provision stating that the General Assembly's intent in enacting the bill is "to increase public awareness and understanding of multiple sclerosis in order to help serve the thousands of Ohioans and their families affected by the disease."

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	01-19-06

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² "Epidemiology." Multiple Sclerosis Information Sourcebook. *Information Resources Center and Library of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2003. Available online at <http://www.nationalmssociety.org>, visited 1-27-2006.*