2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 581

Commending the Alpha-gal Foundation.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 7, 2025
Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 2025

WHEREAS, the Alpha-gal Foundation, a nonprofit organization established by two residents of the New River Valley, works diligently to raise awareness of Alpha-gal Syndrome and support people living with the condition; and

WHEREAS, the Alpha-gal Foundation was established by Candice Matthis and Debbie Nichols after they were diagnosed with Alpha-gal Syndrome in 2019; what started as a blog to help people living with the condition has grown into a comprehensive nonprofit organization that fosters a sense of community and strives to educate the public about the condition; and

WHEREAS, Alpha-gal Syndrome is a tick-borne condition and a potentially life-threatening food allergy characterized by adverse reactions to mammal meat and mammal byproducts; and

WHEREAS, Alpha-gal Syndrome was discovered in 2007 by Thomas Platts-Mills, a professor of medicine at the University of Virginia, who used his clinical expertise and his own personal experiences with an allergy to red meat to establish the link between the sugar molecule alpha-gal and certain allergic reactions; and

WHEREAS, spread by certain species of ticks, including lone star ticks, Alpha-gal Syndrome can cause rashes or hives, gastrointestinal issues, a drop in blood pressure, dizziness, difficulty breathing, or even anaphylaxis between three to eight hours after the ingestion of mammal meat and mammal byproducts; and

WHEREAS, there is no cure for Alpha-gal Syndrome, and treatments are highly dependent on the severity of an individual's allergic reactions; the condition requires a change in diet to avoid symptoms, though some studies have shown symptoms may recede over time; and

WHEREAS, though not widely understood, Alpha-gal Syndrome is the tenth most common food allergy in the United States and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that as many as 450,000 people across the country could be living with the condition; and

WHEREAS, the Alpha-gal Foundation offers critical resources to empower people with Alpha-gal Syndrome by helping them to navigate lifestyle requirements and avoid allergic reactions; and

WHEREAS, the Alpha-gal Foundation recognizes May as Alpha-gal Syndrome Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity for all Virginians to learn more about this condition, contribute to research for treatments and a cure, and provide support to people living with Alpha-gal Syndrome and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Alpha-gal Foundation for its work to raise awareness of Alpha-gal Syndrome and provide critical resources for people in need; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Candice Matthis and Debbie Nichols, founders of the Alpha-gal Foundation, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the organization's service to people living with Alpha-gal Syndrome and their families.