

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Designating August, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as Immunization Awareness Month in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 11, 2026

Agreed to by the Senate, March 3, 2026

WHEREAS, immunizations, or vaccines, are medical preparations designed to train an individual's immune system to recognize and resist specific diseases or pathogens; and

WHEREAS, vaccines, which are produced through various scientific methods and delivered in multiple formats, work by stimulating an immune response that equips the body to identify and combat disease-causing germs more rapidly and effectively when encountered in the future; and

WHEREAS, English physician Edward Jenner is widely credited with developing the world's first successful vaccine; in 1796, he demonstrated that inoculating individuals with the relatively mild cowpox virus granted one immunity to the far more dangerous and highly contagious smallpox disease; and

WHEREAS, since Jenner's discovery, vaccines have been developed for numerous viral and bacterial diseases, including measles, influenza, polio, hepatitis, human papillomavirus, pertussis, tetanus, and COVID-19, dramatically reducing the incidence of severe illness, long-term disability, and death associated with these conditions; and

WHEREAS, vaccines constitute one of the most consequential achievements in the history of medicine, preventing millions of deaths each year and significantly contributing to the remarkable increase in global life expectancy over the past century and a half; and

WHEREAS, vaccination not only protects the individual receiving the immunization but also safeguards more vulnerable members of the community, such as infants, older adults, and those with compromised immune systems, who may be unable to safely receive vaccines themselves; and

WHEREAS, communities experiencing declining vaccination rates have witnessed the troubling resurgence of once-controlled and potentially deadly diseases, underscoring the continued necessity of broad immunization efforts; and

WHEREAS, individuals are encouraged to consult with qualified healthcare professionals to determine which vaccines are recommended based on age, health status, occupation, travel plans, and other relevant factors; and

WHEREAS, several federal, state, and local agencies, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Virginia Department of Health, in collaboration with private-sector partners, have played an essential role in promoting public health through the ongoing development, regulation, distribution, and monitoring of safe, effective, and affordable vaccines; and

WHEREAS, observing Immunization Awareness Month provides an opportunity to highlight the critical role vaccines play in preventing disease and saving lives, while encouraging all individuals to receive their recommended immunizations to safeguard themselves, their loved ones, and their communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate August, in 2026 and in each succeeding year, as Immunization Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Health so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

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