

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2012

Source
SCR 16

**Legislative
Resolve No.**
34



Proclaiming May 2012 to be Celiac Disease Awareness Month.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS celiac disease is a genetic autoimmune disease that damages the lining of the small intestine and may lead to malnutrition; and

WHEREAS people with celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, which is found in common cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and barley; and

WHEREAS, when a person with celiac disease consumes food containing gluten, an immune reaction occurs in the small intestine that damages the tiny projections known as villi that line the intestinal wall and that prevents the villi from effectively absorbing nutrients; and

WHEREAS people with celiac disease suffer debilitating symptoms; and

WHEREAS celiac disease is associated with other disorders, including lupus, Addison's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, Turner's syndrome, Sjögren's syndrome, liver disease, Williams syndrome, Down's syndrome, and fibromyalgia; and

WHEREAS, if left undiagnosed and untreated, celiac disease can increase the risk of cardiovascular damage, other autoimmune diseases, diabetes, malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies, loss of calcium, osteoporosis, lactose intolerance, infertility, intestinal

lymphomas and other gastrointestinal cancers, depression, and neurological manifestations;
and

WHEREAS celiac disease is incurable; and

WHEREAS the only treatment for celiac disease is strict, life-long adherence to a gluten-free diet; and

WHEREAS celiac disease is one of the most common genetic conditions in the world and affects one in 133 people in the United States; and

WHEREAS 97 percent of an estimated 3,000,000 Americans have undiagnosed celiac disease; and

WHEREAS the population of Alaska, according to the 2010 census, is 710,231, which means that more than 5,000 Alaskans could have celiac disease; and

WHEREAS celiac disease affects both males and females and can occur in people of all ages; and

WHEREAS first-degree relatives of people with celiac disease have an estimated one-in-22 chance of developing celiac disease, and second-degree relatives have an estimated one-in-39 chance of developing the disease; and

WHEREAS celiac disease is more commonly found in people who have autoimmune thyroid disease, Down's syndrome, microscopic colitis, or type I diabetes; and

WHEREAS eight to 10 percent of people with type I diabetes also have celiac disease; and

WHEREAS research indicates that celiac disease is twice as common as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and cystic fibrosis combined; and

WHEREAS adults suffering from celiac disease experience an average delay of six to 10 years before being correctly diagnosed; and

WHEREAS the average cost of misdiagnosis of Alaskans with celiac disease is \$5,000 to \$12,000 a year for each person, not including lost work time; and

WHEREAS the Celiac Disease Foundation provides support to people with celiac disease through awareness, education, advocacy, and research programs and offers scholarships to attend gluten-free summer camps to children with celiac disease; and

WHEREAS increased awareness of celiac disease would positively affect the lives of Alaskans with the disease and promote early detection in adults and children so that they may

start on a gluten-free diet and more healthful living;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims the month of May 2012 to be Celiac Disease Awareness Month.