

Jaden's Law Bill Signing

Thank you all for joining us today.

Thank you to Governor Christie for taking action on this important legislation and creating greater awareness of the importance of being a bone marrow donor.

And I especially want to thank Jaden's family for being here. You endured a terrible loss, my condolences to your entire family. Out of this loss, you have become a voice for all those waiting for a bone marrow transplant and I want to thank you for your advocacy.

Today we pay tribute to Jaden through this bill signing.

Today we are taking action ensure our residents are aware of the critical need for bone marrow donation. Today we are saving lives.

Every year across the nation, thousands of people of all ages are diagnosed with leukemia and other life-threatening diseases. Many of them will die unless they receive a bone marrow or cord blood transplant from a matching donor.

Many people aren't aware of great need for bone marrow donors. And those who are aware of the need often believe you need to be a family member to be a match for someone in need of this lifesaving procedure.

The reality is that only 30% of patients will have a relative who matches and is able to donate. The other 70%, or approximately 10,000 people, will need someone outside of their family to donate their healthy marrow.

To help encourage donation and spread awareness, our job at the Department of Health and Senior Services will be educating the public on this issue.

My Department will develop an educational online brochure that outlines options to patients for becoming a bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cell donor.

This brochure will include health benefits to the community through donation, the registry process and the procedures for making a donation.

We will also work with work to promote greater awareness among New Jersey's physicians, so they can bring this message to their patients.

Physicians are a trusted source of information for patients and they can be our partners in spreading information about the importance of blood marrow donation.

Doctors will be able to download this brochure and talk directly to their patients about the option of becoming a donor and answer common questions about the process.

As a doctor, I know how key education is to patients taking action on any health issues and the issue of donation is no different. The more awareness and education we can bring to this subject the more lives we will save.

Another essential part of our job will be working with stakeholders to increase registrants among minority and multicultural populations.

Even with over 13 million potential marrow donors and cord blood units available worldwide, patients of racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds are finding matches less often.

My department will do all it can to help make the registry more robust and increase the odds of those waiting for a transplant to find a match.

Being an donor is one of the most profound gifts you can give... you are giving someone else a chance at a whole new life....a healthy life. And the gift of life is truly the greatest gift of all.

Our goal today is simply to generate greater public awareness about the importance of donation--so, hopefully, those who want to donate--will.

Jaden lost his battle with leukemia, but his gift will remain, he will save the lives of others.