

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 320

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2002

Received and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and  
Pensions

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding scleroderma.

Whereas scleroderma is a debilitating and potentially fatal autoimmune disease with a broad range of symptoms which may be either localized or systemic;

Whereas scleroderma may attack vital internal organs, including the heart, esophagus, lungs, and kidneys, and may do so without causing any external symptoms;

Whereas more than 300,000 people in the United States suffer from scleroderma;

Whereas the symptoms of scleroderma include hardening and thickening of the skin, swelling, disfigurement of the hands, spasms of blood vessels causing severe discomfort in the fingers and toes, weight loss, joint pain, difficulty swallowing, extreme fatigue, and ulcerations on the fingertips which are slow to heal;

Whereas people with advanced scleroderma may be unable to perform even the simplest tasks;

Whereas 80 percent of the people suffering from scleroderma are women between the ages of 25 and 55;

Whereas scleroderma is the 5th leading cause of death among all autoimmune diseases for women who are 65 years old or younger;

Whereas the wide range of symptoms and localized and systemic variations of scleroderma make it difficult to diagnose;

Whereas the average diagnosis of scleroderma is made 5 years after the onset of symptoms;

Whereas the cause of scleroderma is still unknown and there is no known cure; and

Whereas the estimated annual direct and indirect costs of scleroderma in the United States are \$1,500,000,000: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

1           (1) private organizations and health care pro-  
2           viders should be recognized for their efforts to pro-  
3           mote awareness of and research on scleroderma;

4           (2) the people of the United States, including  
5           the medical community, should make themselves  
6           aware of the symptoms of scleroderma and con-  
7           tribute to the fight against scleroderma;

8           (3) the National Institutes of Health should  
9           continue to take a leadership role in research efforts  
10          regarding the fight against scleroderma and should  
11          allow for broad dissemination of the information  
12          learned from such research; and

13          (4) the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-  
14          tion should consider additional methods to improve  
15          disease surveillance of scleroderma.

Passed the House of Representatives September 10,  
2002.

Attest:

JEFF TRANDAHL,

*Clerk.*