

SENATE BILL 2400

By Briggs

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,
relative to PANDAS Awareness Day.

WHEREAS, there is a need to increase public awareness of the serious illnesses PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections) and PANS (Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome); and

WHEREAS, a diagnosis of PANDAS or PANS means a child has a sudden, dramatic change in personality displayed as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) together with accompanying symptoms following a strep, bacterial, or viral infection; the OCD can display as intense fear or anxiety, and accompanying symptoms may include tics, anxiety, depression, behavioral regression, deterioration in school performance, sensory sensitivities, severely restricted food intake, and more; and

WHEREAS, researchers have begun to substantiate that this syndrome involves a misdirected autoimmune process that affects or weakens the blood brain barrier; the inflammatory process irritates a region of the brain that manages a variety of functions, such as movement, cognitive perception, habit, executive "logic-based" thinking, emotions, and the endocrine system; and

WHEREAS, a conservative estimate of the prevalence of the disorders is one in every 200 children in the United States, with 8,000 of those affected children residing in Tennessee; PANDAS/PANS is likely as common as pediatric cancer and pediatric diabetes; and

WHEREAS, PANDAS/PANS is often misdiagnosed and undertreated; treatment varies by the needs of the individual child but may include antibiotics, steroids, plasmapheresis,

cognitive behavioral therapy, anti-inflammatory medications, and IVIG (intravenous immunoglobulin therapy), which is not covered by insurance; and

WHEREAS, PANDAS/PANS has been described as a tsunami that devastates families through financial distress resulting from lost wages and out-of-pocket medical expenses; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health issue, and more must be done to increase activity in identifying and combating PANDAS/PANS at the local, State, and national levels; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

October 9 of each year is observed as "PANDAS Awareness Day," to increase public awareness of the serious illnesses PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections) and PANS (Pediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome).

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.