**[DATE]**

**Governor [FULL NAME]**

**[ADDRESS]**

Dear Governor [LAST NAME],

I am writing to ask you to declare March as [STATE’S] awareness month for Neuromyelitis Optica / Spectrum Disorder, more commonly known as NMO. Please join the entire NMO community in observing this special **NMO Awareness Month** every year in perpetuity.

As residents of [STATE], we understand NMO is underdiagnosed due to the lack of education and awareness in the medical and patient communities.

NMO is an uncommon autoimmune disease syndrome of the central nervous system that affects the optic nerves, spinal cord, and/or brain. Individuals with NMO develop optic neuritis, which causes pain in the eye and vision loss, and transverse myelitis, which causes weakness, numbness, and sometimes paralysis of the arms and legs, along with sensory disturbances and loss of bladder and bowel control.

[INSERT YOUR CONNECTION TO NMO/NMOSD]

Every March, an annual international NMO Roundtable Conference and Patient Day is hosted by The Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to curing NMO. These conferences bring together patients, healthcare professionals, scientists, and industry stakeholders to share and learn face-to-face. Since 2008, the foundation has hosted thousands of attendees from countries all over the world, and the conferences continue to grow each year.

[STATE] has a strong history of support for its citizens’ causes. We respectfully request you designate March as **NMO Awareness Month** in [STATE] in perpetuity.

With best regards,

[NAME], NMO Advocate

[ADDRESS]

**[PHONE]**

**[EMAIL]**

**PROCLAMATION**

**Whereas,** neuromyelitis optica / spectrum disorder, more commonly known as NMO, is an uncommon life-threatening autoimmune disease syndrome of the central nervous system that affects the optic nerves, spinal cord, and/or brain.

**Whereas,** individuals with NMO develop optic neuritis (ON), which causes pain in the eye and vision loss, and transverse myelitis (TM), which causes weakness, numbness, and sometimes paralysis of the arms and legs, along with sensory disturbances and loss of bladder and bowel control.

**Whereas,** in the disease process of NMO, for reasons that aren’t yet clear, immune system cells and antibodies attack and destroy myelin cells in the optic nerves and the spinal cord.

**Whereas,** in the past, NMO was considered to be a severe variant of multiple sclerosis (MS) because both can cause attacks of ON and TM. Recent discoveries, however, suggest it is a separate disease.

**Whereas,** NMO is different from MS in the severity of its attacks and its tendency to solely strike the optic nerves and spinal cord at the beginning of the disease.

**Whereas,** an antibody known as NMO-Immunoglobulin G (NMO-IgG), seems to be present in approximately 75 percent of those with NMO and is not found in people diagnosed with MS or other similar conditions. The NMO-IgG test can be ordered by any primary care physician.

**Whereas,** finding a cure for NMOhas the potential to help solve other autoimmune diseases including MS, Lupus, Sjögren’s, and many more.

**Whereas,** diagnosed NMO residents of [STATE] are among those affected by NMO, as well as those who might still be undiagnosed.

**Whereas,** The Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation is organizing March as the annual awareness month for NMO in perpetuity.

**Whereas,** The Guthy-Jackson Charitable Foundation along with patients, caregivers, scientists, clinicians, industry and regulatory communities in the state of [STATE] will participate in that observance;

**Therefore,** be it resolved thatMarch will be observed as the annual **NMO Awareness Month** in [STATE] in perpetuity.