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Governor Christie Signs Jaden's Law to Promote Bone Marrow Donation Awareness

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today signed Jaden's Law, a measure designed to save lives by promoting bone marrow donation awareness in New Jersey. The bill, S-2038, was inspired by and honors the memory of Jaden Hilton, a 3-year-old boy who lost his battle with Leukemia in 2007 after a suitable bone marrow match could not be located.

"Bone marrow donation is a critical need that deserves the same attention and level of awareness that other lifesaving donor programs, such as blood, organ and tissue donation, currently have in our society," said Governor Chris Christie. "I am pleased to sign this legislation to honor the memory of Jaden Hilton and encourage the public to learn more about the donation process, sign up with the registry and save lives."

Under the new law, the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is required to develop an online brochure that outlines options to patients for becoming a bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cell (PBSC) donor, including registration with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). The brochure, which will be displayed on the Department's website, will also answer common questions about bone marrow and PBSC donation.

"I would like to thank Governor Christie for his leadership in building greater awareness of critical need for bone marrow donation in New Jersey," said Doctor Poonam Alaigh, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). "With the enactment of Jaden's law, DHSS will have additional resources to save lives by working with the provider community to educate the public on the vital need for donors. I commend the incredible efforts of the entire Hilton family for their work on behalf of those who are waiting for these life-saving transplants."

Under the new law the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services will promote awareness among physicians and the general public about the opportunity to become a bone marrow or PBSC donor and will work with key organizations to increase participation among various ethnic groups in New Jersey.

Bone marrow transplants offer lifesaving treatments for patients with leukemia, lymphoma, and many other diseases. However, about 70 percent of these patients have no matching donor within their family. Minorities face even more limited prospects of finding a matching donor because so few are represented in the national registry, according to the National Marrow Donor Program.

Jaden's Law takes effect in 90 days.

Primary sponsors of S-2038 are Senators Loretta Weinberg (D-Bergen) and Teresa Ruiz (D-Essex, Union), and Assemblymembers Valerie Vainieri Huttie (D-Bergen) and Annette Quijano (D-Union).

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