

House Bill 878

By: Representatives Bennett of the 94th, Scoggins of the 14th, Hugley of the 141st, Hawkins of the 27th, Cooper of the 45th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 holidays and observances, so as to designate October 9 of each year as "PANDAS Day" in
3 Georgia; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal
4 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds that:

- 8 (1) Pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) and pediatric autoimmune
9 neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infection (PANDAS) create the
10 sudden onset of obsessive-compulsive disorder in children, causing previously healthy and
11 emotionally well-adjusted children to experience severe anxiety and emotional
12 disturbances;
- 13 (2) Children with PANS and PANDAS experience a range of symptoms, including tics or
14 other abnormal movements, severe separation anxiety, generalized anxiety, irritability,
15 aggression, personality changes, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, marked

- 16 deterioration in learning and school performance, and developmental regression, including
17 regression in handwriting;
- 18 (3) Children with PANS and PANDAS may experience a moderate to dramatic
19 improvement with antibiotics, intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) treatment, or
20 plasmapheresis;
- 21 (4) Researchers at leading academic institutions are engaged in extensive research on the
22 disease mechanism of and effective treatments for these disorders;
- 23 (5) Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) is developing a pilot clinic to treat children
24 with PANS and PANDAS;
- 25 (6) The 2019 PANS Study Committee Report of the House of Representatives identified
26 specific policy goals for Georgia regarding insurance coverage for diagnosis and treatment;
27 pediatric provider training in medical, educational, and behavioral health settings; and
28 increased public health surveillance of these disorders;
- 29 (7) The deep medical and bioscience resources in Georgia make our state well situated to
30 meaningfully contribute to best medical practices, research, and medical technology to
31 advance the early diagnosis and treatment of children with PANS and PANDAS;
- 32 (8) Expert providers in the PANS consortium estimate that one in 200 children have PANS
33 or PANDAS, meaning these diseases affect roughly 15,000 children in Georgia;
- 34 (9) Many general pediatricians, nurse practitioners, and pediatric subspecialists are not
35 familiar with the most current diagnostic criteria and treatment guidelines for these
36 disorders;
- 37 (10) In addition to lack of access to treating providers, many insurers do not cover
38 treatment for PANS and PANDAS, which can cost tens of thousands of dollars, placing the
39 treatment out of reach for most families;
- 40 (11) The Southeastern PANS/PANDAS Association (SEPPA) is a Georgia based,
41 nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to expert, insurance based care for
42 children and families suffering from PANS and PANDAS in this region; and

43 (12) It is imperative that there be greater public awareness of this serious health issue
44 among parents, policymakers, and medical providers in Georgia.

45 **SECTION 2.**

46 Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and
47 observances, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

48 "1-4-27.

49 October 9 of each year is designated as 'PANDAS Day' in Georgia."

50 **SECTION 3.**

51 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.