

HOUSE BILL 67

By Williams K

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,  
Chapter 2, relative to special observance days.

WHEREAS, lymphedema is an accumulation of lymphatic fluid that causes swelling in the arms, legs, or other areas of the body and affects both men and women; and

WHEREAS, the swelling caused by lymphedema can lead to severe infection or loss of the use of limbs, and patients suffering from lymphedema must endure physical discomfort and disfigurement and cope with the distress caused by these symptoms; and

WHEREAS, the single largest group of people who get lymphedema are cancer patients, including breast, prostate, gynecological, head, neck, lung, sarcoma, and melanoma patients; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have indicated that twenty percent (20%) of breast cancer patients will get lymphedema after surgery and radiation; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Cancer Institute, there are a reported eight million, five hundred thousand (8,500,000) Americans living after a diagnosis of cancer, of which about two million (2,000,000) are breast cancer survivors; and

WHEREAS, no drug or effective surgical treatment for lymphedema currently exists; and

WHEREAS, research in all areas of lymphedema has been notably limited; and

WHEREAS, lymphedema, which has no cure and can occur anytime, has a severe financial, physical, and psychological impact on patients; and

WHEREAS, committed to informing the citizens of Tennessee of the importance of lymphedema treatment and research, and honoring those persons whose lives have been affected by lymphedema, this General Assembly has selected the third week in June, as

"Lymphedema Awareness Week" to honor the life of Thomas Hovatter who died as a result of complications of lymphedema on June 18, 2009; now, therefore,

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

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

15-2-123.

( ) The third week of June each year shall be observed as "Lymphedema Awareness Week," to be proclaimed as such by the governor, to encourage all medical facilities in the state to dedicate more time, energy, and funding to the diagnosing and treatment of the disease. This week shall not be a legal holiday as defined in § 15-1-101.

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