

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

May 15, 2023

Dear Mr. President:

Each year the ostomy community unites to celebrate National Ostomy Awareness Day on the first Saturday of October. The aim of National Ostomy Awareness Day is to work toward a society where people with ostomies and intestinal or urinary diversions are universally accepted and supported socially, economically, medically and psychologically.

There are between 725,000 to one million Americans living with an ostomy or continent diversion, and over 100,000 new life-saving ostomy surgeries occur in the United States each year.

For the past six years Representative Donald Payne with other original co-sponsors introduced a House Resolution on the House floor officially declaring National Ostomy Awareness Day. In 2022 this was H.R. 1422. In years past President Reagan and President Clinton have issued Proclamations supporting the ostomy community.

This year we are asking for your support and requesting a Presidential Proclamation recognizing October 7, 2023 as National Ostomy Awareness Day in the United States.

Ostomy surgery may be needed by people who suffer from cancer including colorectal cancer, bladder cancer, cervical and ovarian cancers; inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis; trauma sustained in Military service; birth defects, injury, and other intestinal or urinary or gastroenterology medical conditions. Patients have a surgically-created opening (stoma) in their abdomen for the discharge of waste and a 'pouching prosthetic system' is continuously worn over the stoma to replace the lost functions of waste storage and elimination.

This day is an opportunity to raise awareness and remove stigma about this life-saving surgery to prevent death and promote quality of life for people living with this life-altering new "normal". It's such a simple truth - ostomies are life savers and yet, we continue to hear "I would rather die, then have an ostomy." 34th President Dwight Eisenhower chose life during his Presidency with his ostomy surgery for Crohn's disease in 1956.

The undersigned organizations represent thousands of medical professionals, patients, survivors, caregivers and advocates. We will continue to carry on breaking the silence and shining a positive light on what has saved so many lives. We urge you to join us and increase national visibility of those living with ostomies with a proclamation recognizing National Ostomy Awareness Day.

Please contact Jeanine Gleba, Advocacy Manager, at United Ostomy Associations of America with any questions and response at advocacy@ostomy.org or 207-569-5724.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alive and Kicking

American College of Surgeons

American Gastroenterological Association

American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons

Androscoogin Ostomy Support Group (ME)

Big Island Ostomy Group (HI)

Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network

Bluegrass Chapter of the United Ostomy Associations of America (KY)

CBMC Ostomy Support Group

Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Ostomy Support Group (IA)

Corstrata

Crohn's and Colitis Foundation

Digestive Disease National Coalition

Global Colon Cancer Alliance

Greater Baltimore Ostomy Association (MD)

Fight Colorectal Cancer

Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA (FOW)

International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders

Infirmity Health Ostomy Support Group (AL)

IU Health Jay Ostomy Support Group (IN)

Jacksonville Chapter of the United Ostomy Association of America (FL)

Legacy Health Strategies

National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy

North Sound Ostomy (WA)

Omaha Ostomy Association (NE)

Ostomates of Olympia (WA)

Ostomy-211 (OK) and OstoMyFamily

Ostomy Association of Greater Hartford (CT)

Ostomy Association of Los Angeles (CA)

Ostomy Association of North Central Oklahoma (OK)

Ostomy Support Group of Central Indiana (IN)

Ostomy Support Group of Northern Virginia (VA)

Ostomy Association of Southern New Jersey (NJ)

Pensacola Support Group (FL)

Philadelphia Ostomy Association, Inc. (PA)

Pouchtalk (Concord, NH)

Quality Life Association

Saginaw Tri-County Chapter (MI)

South Palm Beach County Ostomy Support Group (FL)

The Grateful Patient Foundation
 Union County Ostomy Support Group of New Jersey (NJ)
 United Ostomy Associations of America
 Wound Ostomy Continence Nurses Society
 Wound Ostomy Continence National Certification Board
 Youth Rally

