

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 43RD LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO
3 CHARLES III, 2024

Bill 66

(Chapter 29 of the Statutes of Ontario, 2024)

An Act to proclaim Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day and Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week

Mr. R. Cuzzetto

1st Reading	February 22, 2023
2nd Reading	April 6, 2023
3rd Reading	December 11, 2024
Royal Assent	December 19, 2024



EXPLANATORY NOTE

*This Explanatory Note was written as a reader's aid to Bill 66 and does not form part of the law.
Bill 66 has been enacted as Chapter 29 of the Statutes of Ontario, 2024.*

The Bill proclaims February 22 in each year as Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day. The Bill also proclaims the week beginning on the third Monday of September in each year as Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week.

An Act to proclaim Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day and Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week

Preamble

Over one million Canadians have heart valve disease (HVD), which involves damage to one or more heart valves, interrupting the flow of blood. Without treatment, some forms of HVD can lead to major health problems including reduced mobility, stroke and heart failure, and can even lead to death.

Approximately 13 per cent of people aged 75 and over have HVD and, with Ontario's aging population, the incidence of HVD is increasing. Cardiologists describe this as the next epidemic of heart disease.

Studies show the mortality rate in untreated severe, symptomatic aortic stenosis (the most common form of HVD) is between 25 and 50 per cent per year. However, when detected early, HVD is increasingly treatable, often with minimally invasive surgery. Valve repairs and replacements can significantly improve the length and quality of life for patients with HVD.

Unfortunately, HVD symptoms vary widely between individuals and are often dismissed as normal signs of aging. While many patients with HVD may experience shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, heart arrhythmia, dizziness, fainting, swelling of the ankles, feet or abdomen or difficulties sleeping flat due to cough or congestion, others do not have any symptoms.

Increased public awareness and early detection are significant factors in successful treatment. A simple stethoscope check can detect heart murmurs and other abnormal sounds that may indicate HVD. Regular screening is particularly critical for Ontarians at a higher risk of developing HVD, including those over the age of 60, those with a family history of HVD and those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes or other risk factors for heart disease.

February 22 is recognized annually as HVD Awareness Day by organizations such as the Alliance for Aging Research, Heart Valve Voice Canada and the Canadian Cardiovascular Society. The third full week of September will be recognized annually as HVD Awareness Week by the Global Heart Hub and by HVD patient organizations around the world, including Heart Valve Voice Canada and the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.

By proclaiming HVD Awareness Day and HVD Awareness Week, the Province of Ontario recognizes the importance of increasing awareness about the risks and symptoms of HVD, improving the detection and treatment of HVD and supporting Ontarians living with HVD and their families.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day

1 February 22 in each year is proclaimed as Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day.

Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week

2 The week beginning on the third Monday of September in each year is proclaimed as Heart Valve Disease Awareness Week.

Commencement

3 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

4 The short title of this Act is the *Heart Valve Disease Awareness Act, 2024*.