Dwarfism Awareness Month
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A Disability Awareness Committee presentation by:

Dan Okenfuss
• Deputy Legislative Director, California Department of Insurance
• President, Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Chapter of Little People of America, Inc.
Q: What is the definition of dwarfism?

A: Little People of America (LPA) defines dwarfism as a medical or genetic condition that usually results in an adult height of 4'10" or shorter, among both men and women, although in some cases a person with a dwarfing condition may be slightly taller than that. The average height of an adult with dwarfism is 4’0, but typical heights range from 2’8 to 4’8.
Dwarfism explained...
Dwarfism explained…

Q. What are the most common types of dwarfism?

A: The most frequently diagnosed cause of short stature is achondroplasia, a genetic condition that results in disproportionately short arms and legs.

This condition affects approximately one per 26,000 to 40,000 births.
Dwarfism explained…

Q: What is a “midget”?  

A: This term is considered offensive by most people of short stature. The term dates back to late 19th-early 20th centuries, the height of the "freak show" era, and was generally applied only to short-statured persons who were displayed for public amusement, which is why it is considered so unacceptable today.
Dwarfism explained…

Q: So what are better terms to call people with dwarfism?
Dwarfism explained…

A: By their first names! 🙂

- Such terms as “dwarf”, “little person”, “LP”, and “person with dwarfism” are all acceptable, but most people would rather be referred to by their name than by a label.
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• [LPA Dwarfism Awareness Month Video](#)

• [Dwarfism Awareness Month Kickoff in NYC Times Square!](#)

• [Dwarfism Awareness Month PSA](#)
October is Dwarfism Awareness Month

People with dwarfism can be found in all areas of society. We are social workers, teachers, doctors, students, engineers, musicians, parents, and business owners. In recognizing Dwarfism Awareness Month, we hope to celebrate who we are as a community while creating a level playing field to pursue educational, employment and social opportunities on common ground with everyone else.

Join the effort of Little People of America and the Dwarfism Community in support of Dwarfism Awareness Month. Contact Little People of America to learn more.

About LPA
The largest national, membership based organization for people with dwarfism, Little People of America touches lives every day by offering parent and peer support, providing critical medical information, and promoting positive images and respect for the thousands of people with dwarfism across the United States.

1-888-LPA-2001
www.LPAonline.org

Photos courtesy Rick Guidotti, Positive Exposure.
Mission of LPA

• "LPA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives while celebrating with great pride Little People’s contribution to social diversity. LPA strives to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature and their families."
Background on LPA

- LPA started in 1957 by actor Billy Barty with 20 people in Reno, Nevada.
- Billy was an actor on TV. People saw him on the TV shows and wrote him letters. Billy kept every letter he ever received.
- Today LPA has over 6800 members - 50% are little people (people with dwarfism) and 50% are family members.
Background on LPA
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- LPA provides peer, parent and medical support to people with dwarfism and their families through a system of local, regional and national meetings and, as well as online and by phone. LPA also provide scholarship money, adoption assistance, medical grants, and advocacy for the dwarfism community.
Background on LPA

- Employment
- Education
- Disability Rights
- Advocacy
- Adoption
- Medical Issues
- Clothing
- Adaptive Products
- Educational Scholarships
- Parenting a short statured child
Dwarfism Awareness Month

- Hundreds of health-related observances have been declared and are celebrated each year, like Autism Awareness Month (April), Breast Cancer Awareness (October), and the Red Ribbon Campaign (October) along with many lesser known medical conditions.
- **It is time for LPA to celebrate our community as well!**
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• LPA’s GOAL:
  • Contact local state legislatures and request legislation to officially declare the month of October as “Dwarfism Awareness Month.”
Dwarfism Awareness Month

And that’s what we did in 2012 in California...

• Assembly Concurrent Resolution 152
  • Introduced in May 2012
  • Authored by Assemblyman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael)
    • Now “Congressman Jared Huffman” - representing the North Coast from Golden Gate to Oregon border
  • Adopted by the Assembly on July 5, 2012
  • Adopted by the Senate on August 9, 2012
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• “While people with dwarfism are active contributors to our communities and add to the diversity that make our communities strong, social stereotypes and physical barriers often present road blocks, making it more difficult for people with dwarfism to pursue their ambitions and achieve their goals,”

- Assemblymember Jared Huffman, author of CA ACR 152
Dwarfism Awareness Month

Text of ACR 152 (2012):

• WHEREAS, Dwarfism is considered to be a rare medical condition, with an estimated 3,500 people with dwarfism residing in the State of California, over 30,000 people in the United States, and over 650,000 in the world with a type of dwarfism; and
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• WHEREAS, Dwarfism affects bone growth, but generally does not affect cognitive abilities. The typical height range for people with dwarfism is 2 feet 8 inches to 4 feet 5 inches; and
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WHEREAS, About eighty percent of people with dwarfism have average-height parents and siblings, and there are over 300 distinct forms of dwarfism; and
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• WHEREAS, Dwarfism is a recognized condition under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act; and
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• WHEREAS, The medical prognosis for people with dwarfism varies from condition to condition, and with the severity of that condition in each individual. However, the majority of people with dwarfism enjoy normal intelligence, normal life spans, and reasonably good health. Many will require surgeries or other medical interventions to address complications and maximize mobility; and
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• WHEREAS, People with dwarfism can turn to support organizations such as the Little People of America (LPA) for guidance on parenting, adoption, education, medical consultation, physical fitness, peer support, community outreach, and advocacy; and

• WHEREAS, LPA is the nation’s oldest and largest support organization for people with dwarfism and is headquartered in Orange County, California; and
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• WHEREAS, LPA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism, while celebrating with great pride their contributions to social diversity; and

• WHEREAS, People with dwarfism contribute to the strength of California’s economy by being productive members of the workforce, representing numerous careers and professions;
Dwarfism Awareness Month

• Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby declares the month of October as “Dwarfism Awareness Month,” in order to raise public awareness about people with dwarfism and their contributions to the State of California.
Dwarfism Awareness Month
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- With passage of ACR 152, California joined 18 other states and territories that have declared October as National Dwarfism Awareness Month.
Dwarfism Awareness Month

- Arizona
- California
- Delaware
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- Oklahoma
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
Dwarfism Awareness Month

“People with dwarfism are no different than any other person. Our membership includes children, college students, business professionals, doctors, engineers, mechanics, artists and teachers. We can do anything an average-height person can do. In declaring Dwarfism Awareness Month, LPA hopes to raise positive awareness around dwarfism, address common misconceptions, and increase opportunities for people with dwarfism around the country.”

- Gary Arnold, LPA President
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