A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Declaring June 1999 as Obesity Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, obesity is caused by multiple factors, including genetic predisposition and environmental and lifestyle factors; and

WHEREAS, obesity ranks second only to smoking as a preventable cause of death and results in some three hundred thousand deaths annually; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that thirty-five percent of the adult population is obese, and the prevalence of obesity grew a shocking thirty-four percent in the last ten years; and

WHEREAS, there also is a great concern regarding the effect that obesity may have on children and on their overall health, health care costs, and treatment; and

WHEREAS, a causal relationship exists between obesity and a number of serious disorders, including hypertension, dyslipidemia, cardiovascular disease, type-two diabetes, gallbladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, and osteoarthritis; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases provides information that indicates that nearly eighty percent of patients with diabetes mellitus are obese, and the incidence of symptomatic gallstones soars as a person's body mass index increases
WHEREAS, the information also reveals that nearly seventy percent of diagnosed cases of cardiovascular disease are related to obesity, obesity more than doubles a person's chance of developing high blood pressure, almost one-half of breast cancer cases are diagnosed among obese women, and forty-two percent of colon cancer cases are among obese individuals; and

WHEREAS, a 1997 study by Kaiser Permanente indicated that the total direct costs of obesity-related disease in the United States in 1990 was forty-five billion eight hundred million dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Kaiser study concluded that there was significant potential for a reduction in health care expenditures through obesity prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, The Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health estimates that only twenty-four percent of the United States population engages in regular physical activity, fifty-two percent are intermittently active, and twenty-five percent are entirely sedentary; and

WHEREAS, the Interdisciplinary Council on Lifestyle and Obesity Management indicates that healthy lifestyle modifications should include increased physical activity, with an emphasis on moderate forms of exertion; and

WHEREAS, There is an urgent need for state health care groups and medical societies to place obesity at the top of South Dakota's health care agenda; and

WHEREAS, the National Institutes of Health, the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, and the American Obesity Association recommend that patients who are morbidly obese receive responsible, affordable medical treatment for their obesity; and

WHEREAS, the diagnosis of morbid obesity should be a clinical decision made by a physician based on proper medical protocols; and

WHEREAS, the recent breakthroughs in drug therapy can treat obesity successfully, and the New England Journal of Medicine recently emphasized the legitimate use of pharmacotherapy
as a component of treatment of medically significant obesity; and

WHEREAS, the new breakthroughs in obesity treatment are not widely known and efforts must be made to inform the general public and health care professionals that pharmacotherapy can be used as an effective and cost-effective treatment for obesity; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to raise the awareness of the public and private sectors that obesity is a problem of epidemic proportions and that proper treatment will reduce health care costs and improve the quality of life for a large number of our citizens:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-fourth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the Legislature acknowledges obesity as a growing epidemic and encourages improvement in awareness and treatment of the problems of obesity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the medical community be urged to commit itself to combating obesity through the myriad of tools deemed appropriate for the individual, including nutrition, pharmacotherapy, and exercise; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature designates the month of June 1999 as Obesity Awareness Month.