



International
22q11.2 Foundation



PRESS RELEASE

More than 120 Cities Expected to participate in the International 22q11.2 Foundation's Fifteenth Annual "22q at the Zoo" Worldwide Awareness Day® on Sunday May 18, 2025

Families across the globe unite on behalf of chromosome 22q11.2 differences - cities joining daily!

Matawan, NJ (March 1, 2025) The International 22q11.2 Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization committed to improving quality of life of individuals impacted by chromosome 22q11.2 differences (22q) by collaborating with families and professionals, is excited to announce its fifteenth annual "22q at the Zoo" Worldwide Awareness Day taking place in zoos, parks, and playgrounds around the world on Sunday, May 18, 2025. Kicking off at 11:00 a.m. local time in Auckland, New Zealand, the event will circle the globe, concluding at 3:00 p.m. local time in San Diego, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, CA. The purpose of this gathering is to increase awareness of conditions linked to chromosome 22q11.2 differences, such as the 22q11.2 deletion and duplication and to foster connections among patients, families, healthcare providers, and educators.

This year, the 22q at the Zoo Worldwide Awareness Day expects participants from across 26 countries on six continents to gather for the cause of increasing awareness for this common yet underrecognized condition. "22q at the Zoo is the largest awareness event for this condition; in fact, over 10,000 people in 120 cities worldwide took part last year," says Marc Weinberg, a parent of a child with a chromosome 22q11.2 deletion and Chairman of the International 22q11.2 Foundation Board. "The number of undiagnosed individuals is astonishing. With greater awareness, we can enhance detection, care, and hope for 22q patients and their families."

The International 22q11.2 Foundation was founded in 2003 to support families affected by chromosome 22q11.2 deletion syndrome, later expanding its mission to include families with 22q11.2 duplication syndrome and related conditions. The Foundation provides numerous resources for 22q families, including opportunities to connect with others, educational seminars and conferences featuring world-renowned experts, updates on the latest 22q research, and friend-raising events to strengthen community support.

"These conditions can lead to various medical challenges, such as heart defects, difficulties in fighting infections, palate differences, and developmental delays or autism, among others. However, each child is uniquely affected," explains Donna McDonald-McGinn, MS, LCGC, Director of the 22q and You Center; Associate Director of the Clinical Genetics Center; Chief of the Section of Genetic Counseling at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at The Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania; and Founding Board Member of the International 22q11.2 Foundation, Inc. "The 22q11.2 deletion is typically identified as a new variation in a child exhibiting associated features, but it can sometimes be found in a parent as well. Conversely, the 22q11.2 duplication is often identified in multiple family members across generations. Importantly, both chromosome 22q11.2 deletion and duplication syndromes are quite common, affecting thousands of children and adults globally. A recent study indicates that these conditions occur in about 1 in 1000 pregnancies. Furthermore, advancements in diagnostic testing, combined with increased awareness events, are helping to bring more affected individuals to light who may have previously gone undiagnosed. Awareness days like 22q at the Zoo enable us to partner with families to enhance detection, care, and ultimately improve treatment options."

For information on the Worldwide Awareness Day event, please visit <http://www.22q.org/awareness-events/awareness/annual-22q-at-the-zoo/> or join the 22q at the Zoo Worldwide Awareness Day group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/22qAtTheZooWorldwideAwarenessDay/>. Donations to support the Foundation are accepted at www.22q.org. For more information on 22q11.2 deletion or duplication, visit <http://www.22q.org>.

Contact: Debbie DeLoach (704) 649-1510