



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL, EMPIRE STATE PLAZA, NIAGARA FALLS,
NATIONAL GRID BUILDING, FAIRPORT LIFT BRIDGE, AND OTHER ICONIC
NEW YORK LANDMARKS JOIN GLOBAL LIGHTING CAMPAIGN
FOR WORLD PANS/PANDAS AWARENESS DAY ON FRIDAY, OCT. 9**

**Legislative Momentum Builds in New York as State Advances
Insurance Mandate Bills and Prepares for Meeting With Gov. Kathy Hochul**

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Sept. 30, 2026 - On Friday, Oct. 9, communities across the globe will mark [World PANS/PANDAS Awareness Day](#) as the **Alliance to Solve PANS & Immune-Related Encephalopathies (ASPIRE)** launches its third consecutive global **#LightUp4PANS** campaign alongside 17 international advocacy organizations. Illuminating more than 219 landmarks worldwide — including **Grand Central Terminal** (Manhattan), **Empire State Plaza** (Albany), **Niagara Falls**, the **National Grid Building** (Syracuse), and the **Fairport Lift Bridge** (Rochester) — the initiative shines a vital spotlight on **PANS** and **PANDAS**, serious neuroimmune conditions. These key sites anchor a historic **Governor's Decree** issued by **Gov. Kathy Hochul**, directing [15 landmarks](#) across the state to light up green.

Together, these displays show a powerful surge in momentum across **New York State** to recognize **PANS/PANDAS** and support affected families. In **Albany**, the state has recognized **World PANS/PANDAS Awareness Day** through a legislative resolution, two bills mandating insurance coverage are currently advancing, and advocates are preparing for an upcoming meeting with **Gov. Hochul's** team.

The Matrix and *LOST* star **Harold Perrineau**, whose family has lived experience with **PANS/PANDAS**, will join alongside local OCD specialist and licensed mental health counselor, [Barb Shepard](#), and Syracuse's leading pediatric rheumatologists, **Dr. Anjali Sura**, Division Chief of Rheumatology at Upstate University Hospital and **Dr. Caitlin Sgarlat Deluca**, former Director of Pediatric Rheumatology at Upstate.

Driven by direct meetings with local families impacted by **PANS/PANDAS**, **Central New York Assemblymember Pamela Hunter** has stepped forward to co-sponsor the legislation with lead sponsor **Assemblymember Michael Cashman**. The local momentum in Syracuse highlights the state's second annual observance of **World PANS/PANDAS Awareness Day**.

In **Syracuse**, the **National Grid Building** will light up green and be accompanied by a community gathering sponsored by **Wegmans Food Markets**. Physicians from **Upstate University Hospital**, local pediatricians, mental health clinicians, and affected families are scheduled to attend in support of the **#PANSSTRONG** initiative. Community members can [RSVP on Facebook](#) and order awareness merchandise from the [CARE Loudly Etsy Shop](#).

The iconic **New York** locations participating in the statewide **#LightUp4PANS** initiative:

- **Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge** (Tarrytown & South Nyack)
- **Kosciuszko Bridge** (Brooklyn & Queens, New York City)
- **The H. Carl McCall SUNY Building** (Albany)
- **State Education Building** (Albany)
- **Alfred E. Smith State Office Building** (Albany)
- **Empire State Plaza** (Albany)
- **State Fairgrounds – Main Gate & Expo Center** (Geddes, Syracuse)
- **Niagara Falls** (Niagara Falls)
- **The “Franklin D. Roosevelt” Mid-Hudson Bridge** (Poughkeepsie & Highland)
- **Grand Central Terminal – Pershing Square Viaduct** (Manhattan, New York City)
- **Albany International Airport Gateway** (Colonie, Albany)
- **MTA LIRR – East End Gateway at Penn Station** (Manhattan, New York City)
- **Fairport Lift Bridge over the Erie Canal** (Fairport, Rochester)
- **Moynihan Train Hall** (Manhattan, New York City)
- **Roosevelt Island Lighthouse** (Roosevelt Island, Manhattan, New York City)
- **National Grid Building** (Syracuse)

“Lighting landmarks green is about more than awareness. It is about making PANS and PANDAS visible so that families are heard, healthcare providers recognize the signs, and patients have a better chance of getting the care they need,” said **Gabriella True, president of ASPIRE**. “Too many families still spend months or years searching for answers and appropriate treatment. We want every green light on October 9 to help change that.”

World PANS/PANDAS Awareness Day has become an important event for families, healthcare providers, and advocacy organizations to unite in solidarity. Beyond landmark lighting, this year’s campaign calls for greater public understanding, expanded research into treatments, and more comprehensive healthcare services for affected families.

“It’s really important to treat these conditions right away,” emphasized **Dr. Susan Swedo**, a neuroscientist and lead researcher for 25 years. “The faster you treat, the faster they can get well. You have to treat the cause, the underlying immune abnormality, and then the symptoms.”

The cost of inaction can be significant. When **PANS** and **PANDAS** are not recognized and treated properly, patients may cycle through repeated medical visits, specialists, emergency, and inpatient care. Families face school disruption, lost work, and mounting financial strain. Gaps in provider education can delay recognition and treatment. Insurance barriers can put appropriate care out of reach. Earlier recognition, knowledgeable providers, and access to necessary treatment can reduce avoidable suffering, disability, and long-term costs to families and communities.

ASPIRE'S LANDMARK LIGHTING CONTRIBUTIONS

As part of this global effort, **ASPIRE** is proud to announce its successful partnership to light

iconic landmarks across the globe. All locations will **#LightUp4PANS** on **Oct. 9** unless otherwise noted:

- **Arizona:** Gilbert Water Tower (Gilbert - Oct. 7)
- **Arkansas:** Union Plaza Building (Little Rock)
- **Delaware:** Legislative Hall (Dover)
- **Florida:** City of Tampa City Center, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Old City Hall, River Tower Park, Tampa Bridges, and Tampa Riverwalk (Tampa)
- **Indiana:** Culver Pediatrics (Culver); MLK Jr. Bridge (Fort Wayne)
- **Iowa:** City of Iowa City Public Works Building (Iowa City); Durham Bandshell, Lighted Tower Sculpture / Highway 30 (Ames); Waterloo River Lights Experience, Waterloo River Loop Amphitheatre (Waterloo)
- **Kansas:** Amidon Bridge (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10); Douglas Trellis/Tower Lights (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10); East Kellogg Avenue Bridges (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10); Harry Bridge (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10); McLean and Meridian Tower Lighting (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10); Wichita City Hall (Wichita - Oct. 9 & 10)
- **Maryland:** Government House (Annapolis); M&T Stadium (Baltimore - Oct. 8); Salisbury City Park Bandstand (Salisbury); Winchester Hall (Frederick)
- **Minnesota:** Frances Avenue Median Lighting (Edina); I-35W St. Anthony Falls Bridge, Lowry Bridge (Minneapolis); U.S. Bank Stadium (Minneapolis)
- **Missouri:** Kansas City Convention Center (Kansas City)
- **Nebraska:** Nebraska State Capitol (Lincoln); Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge (Omaha)
- **New York:** *noted above*
- **North Carolina:** Wake Forest Town Hall (Wake Forest); Winston-Salem City Hall/Green Street Pedestrian Bridge (Winston-Salem)
- **Ohio:** Paycor Stadium (Cincinnati- Oct. 7); The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (Cleveland), The Terminal Tower (Cleveland)
- **Oklahoma:** Skydance Bridge (Oklahoma City)
- **Rhode Island:** Sakonnet River Bridge (Portsmouth)

ASPIRE encourages **New York** residents to look for these landmarks lit up on **Oct. 9** and to join families around the world in spreading awareness. To learn more and follow campaign updates, visit www.aspire.care or connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT PANS AND PANDAS

PANS and **PANDAS** are serious neuroinflammatory conditions that can cause the sudden or newly worsening onset of obsessive-compulsive symptoms, severe anxiety, tics, and other neuropsychiatric symptoms. Without timely diagnosis and treatment, they can become debilitating and have a profound impact on children, adults, their families, and communities.

Despite their significant impact, **PANS** and **PANDAS** remain under-recognized by both the public and medical community, often leading to delayed diagnosis and prolonged suffering. Greater awareness and earlier recognition, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment can improve outcomes and help prevent symptoms from persisting or becoming chronic.

ABOUT ASPIRE

The **Alliance to Solve PANS & Immune-Related Encephalopathies (ASPIRE)** is a 501[©](3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults affected by PANS, PANDAS, and related immune-related encephalopathies. Through education, advocacy, support, and research initiatives, ASPIRE works to increase awareness, improve early recognition, and expand access to comprehensive care.

Editor's Note: Interviews with an **ASPIRE** representative, affected families, or additional information about the **#LightUp4PANS** campaign are available upon request.

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