

# Epilepsy News

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Welcome to Epilepsy News. We pride ourselves at sending you the most up-to-date information about epilepsy events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.

Please consult our website for further information: [www.efnj.com](http://www.efnj.com).



## Our Administrative Office has Moved!

Our new address is 1 AAA Drive, Trenton, NJ 08691

### North Jersey Office

322 US Highway 46, Ste. 220  
 Parsippany, NJ 07054  
 (973) 244-0850

### Central Jersey Office

2416 Highway 35  
 Manasquan, NJ 08736  
 (732) 528-8080

### South Jersey Office

216 Haddon Avenue  
 Suite 329  
 Westmont, NJ 08108  
 (856) 858-5900

### Heads Up for Safety

35 Beaverson Blvd.  
 Building 11  
 Brick, NJ 08723  
 (732) 262-8020

## Quick Links

[Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey](#)  
[The Family Support Center of New Jersey](#)  
[The Family Resource Network](#)

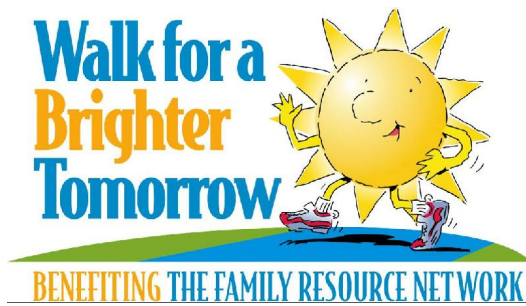
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## Epilepsy Legislation A3029

On June 4th, the Epilepsy Prescription Legislation A3029 passed out of the Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee. This bill prohibits substitution of prescribed epilepsy drugs by pharmacists without prior notification to and approval of physician and patient. On June 15th the same bill, S2071 was heard for "discussion only" in the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. Our next step is for the bill to be heard by the full Assembly before the end of the legislative session. We are working hard to ensure that this bill gets passed before the end of the year. It is vital that we continue to work hard for this legislation to ensure that patients taking anticonvulsant medications and their physicians are notified before any switch is made to their medication.

We need to continue to gather stories of people who have experienced breakthrough seizures as a result of uninformed medication switches. If you have experienced a problem with medication switching, please contact us at 800.336.5843.

## Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey to Hold Walk-a-thon



Join us on Sunday, October 11, 2009 as EFNJ and The Family Resource Network host a state-wide Walk-a-thon titled Walk for a Brighter Tomorrow at Roosevelt Park, in Edison, New Jersey. This will be a fun filled day for families and friends to walk in support of their loved ones. A casual 5k Walk, entertainment and refreshments will be just a few of the day's highlights. There are already 8 teams registered that will be supporting the efforts of EFNJ.

So call your family, friends and co-workers and start a walk team today! You can find more information and register online at [www.walkforabrightertomorrow.org](http://www.walkforabrightertomorrow.org) or via phone 1-800-FRN-2345. When registering to walk please note that you can choose to direct all of your money raised specifically to EFNJ. Just choose EFNJ from the drop down menu on the online registration form.

Please join us in our continuing efforts to provide low-cost quality services to New Jersey families living with developmental disabilities and chronic illness. You can make a difference!

## Two New Educational Programs in New Jersey

Through the Seniors and Seizures program, the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey will be conducting presentations for caregivers of seniors in an effort to educate them on seizure first aid and epilepsy. Seniors are one of the highest growing populations affected by seizures. If you or someone you know is interested in this training please contact Andrea Infante in our South Jersey office at 856.858.5900 x301 or [ainfante@efnj.com](mailto:ainfante@efnj.com).

Through our Law Enforcement and Epilepsy program, law enforcement personnel will learn how they can reduce the risk of injury and a fatal outcome when they are able to properly identify seizure types and respond correctly. The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey offers free trainings for police departments. For further information or to schedule a training please contact Patti Reale in our Parsippany office at 973-244-0850 or [preale@efnj.com](mailto:preale@efnj.com).

## Benefit BBQ in North Brunswick for The Epilepsy Foundation of NJ



The family of the late Michael Meehan held their fourth annual fundraiser in North Brunswick on Saturday, June 20, 2009. The barbeque benefit raised over \$3,000 to support the Michael Meehan Emergency Medication Fund. The event was open to the public and included food, refreshments and an auction. Michael Meehan, 26, a resident of North Brunswick and Kendall Park was in a fatal car accident in February 2006. Since Michael was on anti-epileptic medication to prevent seizures, which can be very expensive, his family has directed the money to help provide help to those who cannot afford prescriptions.

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Meehan Family for all of their support!

*Pictured in Photo: Family and Volunteer Organizers*

## EFNJ Scholarship Winners Announced

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey scholarship program has been in existence for 17 years. The scholarship awards graduating high school seniors with Epilepsy who plan to attend college. Academic achievement, participation in activities and financial need are considered. The extent of a student's disability is taken into account as well, so that s/he need not be near the top of her/his class to qualify.

The EFNJ scholarship is donor supported. This year we would like to thank Eric Geller, M.D., from Saint Barnabas' Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery, for his generous donation. If you would like to support this and other programs that benefit people with Epilepsy and their families, [click here](#).

Congratulations to our three winners for 2009!

**Samantha Davis** is from Moorestown, NJ. Samantha attended Moorestown High School and will be attending Burlington County College after the summer. We wish her luck at college and into the future!

**Jessica Hillwig** is from Jackson, NJ. Jessica attended Jackson Liberty High School, and in the fall will be attending Coastal Carolina University. Jessica serves on the EFNJ Youth Council and in 2007, represented EFNJ at the Kids Speak UP, Speak Out event in D.C. Good luck Jessica!

**Jamieson Smith** is from Medford, NJ and attended Shawnee High School. Jamieson will be attending Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia and we wish him the best!

## 2009 Expressions of Courage® Art Contest Now Accepting Entries

Expressions of Courage® is a national art contest for people with epilepsy. The contest showcases the talent and inspiration of people across the country living with the condition.

Ortho-McNeil Neurologics®, Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc, in partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation, invites people diagnosed with epilepsy of all ages to share their artwork in this year's contest. The contest will be open for entries from May 11, 2009 through August 28, 2009. A panel of epilepsy advocates, art industry representatives and healthcare experts will serve as contest judges and will announce the winning artwork in November. Entries are judged based on creativity and the ability to bring to life the experiences of living with epilepsy.



Artwork may be created in ink, pencil, crayon, paint or a combination of these materials and must be on paper or board no larger than 8 ½ by 11 inches. Contest entries will be categorized into three age groups: children ages 12 years old and younger; teens age 13 to 17; and adults 18 years of age and older. Multiple submissions will be accepted.

Winners will be highlighted on the Expressions of Courage® Web site. A few winning pieces will also be chosen by curators from the Society for the Arts in Healthcare for display in a traveling art exhibition comprising more than 20 winning entries from contests in the past.

Please send original artwork and a completed entry form to:

Expressions of Courage®  
c/o Ortho-McNeil Neurologics®  
389 Pittstown Road  
Pittstown, NJ 08867

To download the Expressions of Courage® entry form and review the rules and regulations, [click here](#), or call the Contest Help

Line at 800-224-4935 with questions.

*Expressions of Courage® is a program developed and funded by Ortho-McNeil Neurologics®, in partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation.*

## **UCB Launches Vimpat in the US for Add-on Treatment of Epilepsy**

New antiepileptic drug with novel mechanism of action helps address critical unmet medical need for many people living with uncontrolled epilepsy.

ATLANTA - May 26, 2009 -UCB today announced that Vimpat® (lacosamide), a new antiepileptic drug (AED) is available in the U. S. as an add-on therapy for the treatment of partial-onset seizures in people with epilepsy who are 17 years and older. Vimpat will be available in U.S. pharmacies by the first week of June 2009.

"Vimpat provides new hope in helping patients move closer to the goal of seizure freedom," said Steven S. Chung, MD, Director of Clinical Epilepsy Research at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix. "Vimpat can help patients across the treatment paradigm, from those recently diagnosed who have not achieved seizure control on current therapy, to those who have tried a variety of medications and are still suffering from frequent seizures."

While treatment with one drug remains the goal of AED therapy and provides adequate control to many patients, almost 40 percent of patients with epilepsy receive suboptimal seizure control on one medication. In these situations, a physician may prescribe different treatments until one is found to provide adequate seizure control for the patient.

However, some studies indicate that when primary therapy is well-tolerated, but does not provide adequate seizure control, adding an additional AED to the current one provides more seizure control than continually switching therapies.

The approval of Vimpat is based on efficacy and safety data from one Phase II and two Phase III clinical trials with approximately 1,300 adults with epilepsy who had uncontrolled partial-onset seizures.

Before adding Vimpat, patients experienced a median baseline seizure frequency ranging from 10 to 17 seizures per month, despite being on one to three other AEDs; and 45.2 percent of patients had previously tried seven or more AEDs to control their seizures.

The most common side effects with Vimpat are dizziness, headache, nausea and blurred vision. Patients with heart rhythm problems should discuss this with their physician before taking Vimpat.

Reviewed by Epilepsy Foundation Professional Advisory Board member Dr. Brian Alldredge, PharmD

## **Lamictal® ODT™ Orally Disintegrating Tablets Approved by the FDA**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved Lamictal® ODT™ (lamotrigine) Orally Disintegrating Tablets. Lamictal ODT uses a novel drug-delivery formulation in a tablet that has a reportedly pleasant taste and disintegrates on the tongue.

This medication offers an option to people who are not able to, or have difficulty, swallowing tablets. Lamictal ODT will be available in 25 mg, 50 mg, 100 mg and 200 mg strengths and is expected to be available in pharmacies in June.

Thank you for reading Epilepsy News! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our listserv, please email me at [aracioppi@efnj.com](mailto:aracioppi@efnj.com) or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Andrea Racioppi  
Associate Director  
Epilepsy Foundation of NJ

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