



THE EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF FLORIDA'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS, EVENTS AND HOT TOPICS IMPACTING FLORIDA'S EPILEPSY COMMUNITY.

Educate for Hope

Message from the CEO:



Thank you all for your feedback on our Educate for Hope monthly newsletter. We're glad that you are enjoying our updates on upcoming events, legislation and the latest epilepsy information.

The 2015 Legislative Session is about to begin and EFOF is gearing up to protect the over 375,000 Floridians with epilepsy. Our Capitol Day is scheduled for April 8th, and we will be hosting a Purple+ Red+ Blue reception to honor and recognize the senators and representatives who continue to champion on behalf of those with epilepsy and seizure disorders across the state. In addition, medical marijuana is an issue at the forefront this legislative session. I traveled to Tallahassee earlier this month as a patient advocate for the Charlotte's Web rulemaking hearing. Progress was made and the panel is now in the 21-day comment period. We'll bring you the latest next month on all of the progress taking place in the state capital.

Last but not least, we're very excited to bring to you the annual Walk the Talk events throughout Florida. These walks are so inspiring and bring much needed attention to ending epilepsy's stigma and raising awareness of this disease. We encourage you, and your family and friends to register at www.epilepsyfla.org. See you there!

Let's make this a year no one will forget!

Sincerely,
Karen Basha Egozi,

Chief Executive Officer
Epilepsy Foundation of Florida

Legislative Update

Already this session, EFOF has seen widespread activity in Tallahassee around alternative epilepsy treatments. Senator Jeff Brandes filed S.B. 528, [The Florida Medical Marijuana Act](#). Under the legislation, eligible patients could receive as much as a 30-day supply of marijuana from a licensed regulated facility. The proposed legislation also states that physicians can recommend medical cannabis for patients who suffer from other ailments and have exhausted other remedies to lessen their suffering. If approved and signed into law by the Governor, it will go into effect on July 1, 2015.

There's also a House version of the bill, [H.B. 683](#), filed by Representative Greg Steube and Representative John Wood that is not as comprehensive as the Senate Bill, but does provide relief to epilepsy patients. What's comforting is both the Senate and the House are working together to address legislative concerns early in the process to give the legislation a real chance to pass prior to the end of session.



Our Agency's CEO issued an opinion piece about the Senate version of the legislation which ran in markets across the state. To read the piece, visit the [Pensacola News Journal](#) or [Florida Times-Union](#).

Additionally, last month, the Department of Health reconvened a rulemaking hearing to redevelop the framework that would allow implementation of last year's Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act, or Charlotte's Web, legislation. The two-day hearing resulted in a new rule draft that is now available online for review. Once the rules take into account feedback from the interested public, the Department of Health will hopefully have clearance to select the nurseries who will provide Charlotte's Web to the state and implement the law.

Technological Innovations Impacting the Treatment of Epilepsy

New Algorithm Developed to Predict Seizures

A [new algorithm](#) has been discovered to help predict when an individual with epilepsy will have their next seizure. The National Institute of Health (NIH) has reported this new algorithm can predict the onset of a seizure with an 82 percent success rate. Before this discovery, the prior algorithm for predicting seizures was about as accurate as 50 percent. The discovery of this new algorithm was created as part of [Kaggle.com](#)'s American Epilepsy Society Seizure Detection Challenge. [Kaggle.com](#) is the world's largest community of data scientists. The challenge consisted of two areas, detection and prediction of seizures. More than 500 teams from around the world participated in the challenge. The winner was Michael Hills, a computer engineer from Australia. This new algorithm classifies various aspects of localized electrical field potential in the brain.

NeuroPace Offers Hope for Toughest Epilepsy Cases

[Sheri Finsatd](#) has gone through nine years of seizures and was ready to try anything to stop them. In October of 2014, Finsatd went to Mayo Clinic to seek help. The doctors at Mayo Clinic implanted a device in her brain designed to deliver mild electrical pulses and record the brain's reaction. This is the same stimulation therapy used to typically treat Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders. Since January 2015, about four months after the surgery, Finsatd has had dizziness and headaches, but no seizures. She can't tell the device is on, as it only sends low frequency signals to her brain. This therapy will help doctors learn more about the brain and how it reacts to epilepsy.

Detecting Seizures With New SmartWatch

Parents are always concerned about their child's safety because a seizure can occur anytime. SmartMonitor has released the [SmartWatch](#), as an easy-to-use, non-invasive wristwatch that continuously monitors movements and instantly alerts connected family members and caregivers upon the onset of repetitive, irregular shaking motion. The SmartWatch pairs with a compatible Android phone. It will send out an alert via text message and include the GPS coordinates of the person having a seizure. The wristwatch constantly registers the user's motions, and its algorithms crunch the data to look for a pattern of movement that closely resembles a seizure.

Walk the Talk for Epilepsy Events Are On the Horizon



The Epilepsy Foundation of Florida's annual Walk the Talk for Epilepsy events are around the corner. It's never too late to start forming your teams. The Walk the Talk for Epilepsy events aim to raise awareness and funds to benefit Floridians with epilepsy. The support and cooperation helps the EFOF provide much needed services, outreach, education and awareness to continue the fight to stop seizures.

Food, fun and a festive atmosphere will be provided to all who attend.

All location registrations begin at 8 a.m. and the walks begin at 9 a.m.

Gainesville

Saturday, April 11
Sidney Lanier Center
312 NW 16th Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Jacksonville

Saturday, April 18
Jacksonville University
2800 University Blvd. N.
Jacksonville, Florida 32211

West Palm Beach

Sunday, April 19
Palm Beach Zoo
1301 Summit Boulevard
West Palm Beach, Florida 33405

Daytona

Saturday, April 25
Mary Bethune Park
6656 Atlantic Avenue
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

Miami

Saturday, March 14
Tropical Park
7900 SW 40th Street
Miami, Florida 33155

Broward

Sunday, March 15
North Beach Park
3601 N. Ocean Drive
Hollywood, Florida 33019

Treasure Coast Walk

Sunday, March 22
Indian Riverside Park
1707 NE Indian River Drive
Jensen Beach, Florida

Pensacola

Saturday, April 11
Bayfront Stadium
351 W. Cedar St.
Pensacola, Florida 32502

Call 1-877-553-7453 or email info@efof.org to request material in accessible format, information on access for persons with disabilities, or a sign language interpreter (7 days in advance of the event).

CORRECTION: In the January newsletter, the issue erroneously stated "those who have remained seizure free for 110 years." The sentence should have read 10 years. We apologize for the error and any confusion it caused to our readers.



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