



"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

- William James

**Epilepsy Services of
Southwest Florida**

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter
Twelfth Edition-
January/February 2022**

Happy New Year to our clients, physicians, donors, sponsors, supporters, and community members!

We are still faced with many of the challenges we experienced in 2021. The COVID-19 virus and other variants are still evident, and we hope that you, your family and friends will be vaccinated soon.

We are looking forward to where we can all eventually come together again and continue on a path to a healthy, safe and prosperous life.

Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida always puts the health, safety, and well-being of our clients, employees and stakeholders first.

We are following the recommendations of the local and national authorities and are abundantly concerned for all members of our community.

IMPORTANT! Our staff will be in our offices on a limited basis to take deliveries and phone calls, but will continue to work remotely and can be reached via email or phone.

All client clinic visits with their physician will be coordinated from our offices.

These visits will be scheduled by your Case Manager and they will contact you regarding your appointment.

Please call the following numbers or email to connect with your Case Manager:

Fort Myers Office (also serves Naples), Dee Cilento: (239) 275-4838 ext.1, email dcilento@esswfl.org or *Gwendolyn Howerton*; (239) 275-4838 ext.2, email ghowerton@esswfl.org

Sarasota & Bradenton office, *Diane Walz:* (941) 752-6226; email dwalz@esswfl.org

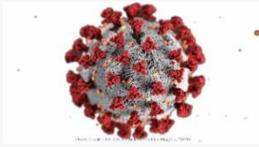
Other inquiries:
Executive Director, *Barbara Coleman:* (941) 953-5988, ext. 316, email bcoleman@esswfl.org

Prevention & Education information,
Executive Director, *Barbara Coleman:* (941) 953-5988, ext. 316, email bcoleman@esswfl.org

Director of Development, *Tom Swanston,* (757)377-4016. email tswanstone@esswfl.org

In the event of an emergency, please call 911, as Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida is not an emergency service organization.

Our staff hopes you and your loved ones stay healthy and safe during this difficult time.



Exciting News! New physician to join Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida in 2022!

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Joshua Pankratz to Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida.

Dr. Pankratz is a board certified Neurologist and is fellowship trained in Neurophysiology and Epilepsy. Dr. Pankratz works closely with his colleagues to provide a comprehensive and multidisciplinary treatment plan for his patients. He is a member of the American Academy of Neurology and the American Epilepsy Society. Dr. Pankratz is affiliated with First Physicians Group of Sarasota Memorial Health Care System.

We are grateful for his time and expertise to assist our clients with their medical needs.

His specialties and practice focus include:

Epilepsy, including medically intractable (drug-resistant) epilepsy
EEG interpretation, ambulatory and 24-hour continuous
Neurostimulation for epilepsy

American Board Certified: Neurology

Medical School: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Residency: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Fellowship: University of Wisconsin-Madison University of Wisconsin-Madison

WELCOME DR. PANKRATZ!



"Ask the Expert" - a new way to ask your questions or express concerns:

In response to the government health recommendations regarding COVID-19, **we have cancelled our monthly group support meetings.** We want to "keep the conversation going" and would like to hear any questions or concerns you have regarding epilepsy. These can be questions about yourself, a loved one, friend, family member, neighbor, etc. We will gather questions and respond to them in upcoming newsletters. All questions posted will remain anonymous and we will "ask the expert" to respond to your question or concern. **Listed below is a question we received this month.**

"Can people with epilepsy live on their own?"

Managing epilepsy is more than just the knowing how to handle the medical aspects of seizures or knowing how to stay safe. A key part is knowing how it can affect a person's independence and day-to-day needs. It's also important to know how to get help when it is needed. Some people may live on their own, alone or with immediate families. Others may need a more structured or supervised living arrangement.

Did You Know...

- 1 in 5 adults with active epilepsy lives alone
- Unemployment and underemployment is greater in adults with active epilepsy
- 32.5% are unable to work
- Another 13.25% are limited in work due to epilepsy
- 43.7% of adults with active epilepsy with recent seizures are disabled
- About 50% of adults with active epilepsy and seizures have family incomes less than \$25,000
- 1 out of 3 parents of children with epilepsy worry that their food will run out or won't last until they get more money

Things To Consider For Independent Living:

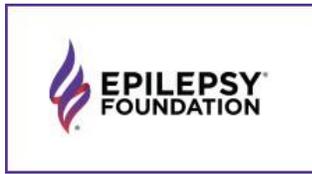
Many things can affect a person's ability to live independently and work, go to school, afford food and shelter, or socialize in their community. The list is endless but here are a few things to consider...

- Seizure type, severity, or frequency
- After effects or postictal symptoms of a seizure
- Impact of seizures and side effects of treatment on cognition, mood, social abilities, relationships, and more
- Other neurological and developmental challenges, which may be part of an epilepsy syndrome or associated with the cause of epilepsy.
- Attitudes and beliefs about epilepsy
- Available resources and supports
- The environment and area where the person lives
- Cost of living, the person's financial stability, and community resources

To learn more about this important topic, please go to the Epilepsy Foundation's website via this link:

<https://www.epilepsy.com/living-epilepsy/independent-living>

To submit a question for our next newsletter, please email:
bcoleman@esswfl.org.



Don't Miss this Conversation with Caregivers

Did you miss the recent caregiver conversation with Luke Rosen and Tonya Nash sponsored by the Epilepsy Foundation? A replay of the event is now available. Hear insights about caring for loved ones with rare epilepsies, including navigating the holidays, work-life balance, and finding time for self-care.

Please click on this link to view the replay on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K45BkqcpN0o>



In each issue of this newsletter we will feature members of our staff or volunteer board of directors with the intention that you will be able to get to know a little bit better the faces behind the names.

This issue we are featuring Tom Swanston, ESSWFL's new Director of Development.



Tom Swanston has joined ESSWFL in a newly created position, Director of Development. Tom will be responsible for all fund-raising activities and will help bring awareness about our organization in the communities we serve. Please join us in welcoming Tom to our team! Learn about his background below:

I am Tom Swanston and I am thrilled to be the new Director of Development at Epilepsy of Southwest Florida. I have a B.A. in Psychology, MBA and have a certification as a CFRE (Certified Fundraising Executive). To get this certification, one must have a proven track record in raising funds, certain amount of accredited classes and a number of years as a fundraising professional. The CFRE also assures a very high standard in knowledge of the ethics of fundraising.

I joined the organization having been exposed to people with seizures for over 30 years. 29 years I was a CEO of a two-state, \$7 million, 501 (c) non-profit serving as its primary population, people with developmental disabilities. I also served as an Executive Director Rainbow Therapeutic Riding Center for a couple of years that served people with disabilities. Most of my career has been dedicated to the service of people with disabilities.

Since I taught Sunday school to people with disabilities three decades ago, I have been amazed at their resilience and the kind of quality of life improvement they can have with just a little Help.

What made me decide to work at Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida was I have seen seizures for over 30 years and they can often affect the ability to carry on normal activities. Second, when I met the board chair and heard her story I was hooked.

I hope if you are reading this you will get involved in what I consider to be the most incredible cause out there: helping people with epilepsy. If you want to donate to the cause or get involved, please call me at 757-377-4016.



DONATE TODAY!

We need your help! Donations are always welcome and without them we would not be able to do the work that we do. Your gift helps ensure our clients continue to receive critical medical attention including access to neurologists, diagnostic testing and assistance accessing medications as well as case management services and prevention and educational programs to the community at large. Here are current donation opportunities:



Louis and Gloria Flanzer Philanthropic Trust Matching Gift Program

The 2021 Flanzer Matching Gift Program will match any gift from \$5 to \$500 to Epilepsy Service of Southwest Florida. "Louis and Gloria Flanzer always believed in the goodness and generosity of people" said Eric Kaplan, co-trustee of the Flanzer Trust. Please support Epilepsy Services by donating today.



Prevention & Education Services

If you would like a presentation to your business, your club meeting or your office, please contact Barbara Coleman, Executive Director at bcoleman@esswfl.org or 941-953-5988, Ext. 316 for a **free** presentation. Presentations can be done via Zoom to promote social-distancing.

Barbara will be glad to train your staff on how to respond to someone having a seizure or just make an informative presentation about epilepsy – the fourth most common neurological disorder in the United States after migraine, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease.

About Us

The goal of Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida is to assist in the process of empowering our patients

How to donate:

- Click on the BE A DONOR TODAY button below and you will be directed to a page where you can pay either by PayPal or Credit card.
- Type in the amount of your gift from \$5 to \$500.
- **Designate Epilepsy Services of SWFL in the drop down menu at the bottom of the page to ensure your gift is directed to us.**
- If you would like to make a donation by check, please make the check out to: The Louis & Gloria Flanzer Philanthropic Trust, 1843 Floyd Street, Sarasota, FL 34239 and **indicate Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida in the memo section.**

Thank You!

BE A DONOR TODAY!

toward self-management in order to lead as close to a normal life as possible.

Go to our website to learn more about our organization and take time to view our video:

epilepsy-services.org



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You can shop at Amazon Smile and the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to our organization. Just select Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida as your charitable organization. You can use your Amazon account or set up an account at Amazon Smile.

We sincerely thank you for your consideration and support!

For more info go to: <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=Lw==>

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