



"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

- Albert Einstein

**Epilepsy Services of
Southwest Florida**

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter
Thirteenth Edition-
March/April 2022**

**Greetings 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

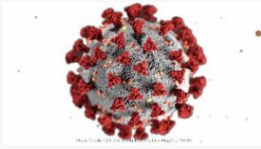
Other inquiries:
Executive Director, **Barbara Coleman:** (941) 953-5988, ext. 316, email bcoleman@esswfl.org

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

Director of Development, **Tom Swanston,** (941) 953-5988, ext. 303, email tswanston@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.



"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.

"What exactly is a seizure?"

A seizure is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain.

A seizure usually affects how a person appears or acts for a short time.

Many different things can occur during a seizure.

Seizures can take on many different forms, and seizures affect different people in different ways. Anything that the brain does normally can also occur during a seizure when the brain is activated by seizure discharges. Some people call this activity "electrical storms" in the brain.

Seizures have a beginning, middle, and end. Not all parts of a seizure may be visible or easy to separate from each other. Every person with seizures will not have every stage or symptom described below. The symptoms during a seizure usually are stereotypic (occur the same way or similar each time), episodic (come and go), and may be unpredictable.

Things to know:

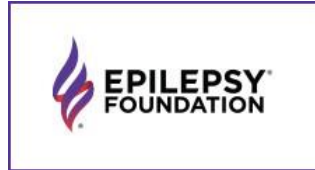
- Seizures can take on many different forms, and seizures affect different people in different ways.
- Not all parts of a seizure may be visible or easy to separate from each other. Every person with seizures will not have every stage or symptom.
- An aura or warning is the first symptom of a seizure and is considered part of the seizure. Not everyone has an aura.
- The middle of a seizure is often called the **ictal phase**. This correlates with the electrical seizure activity in the brain.

- As the seizure ends, the **postictal phase** occurs - this is the recovery period after the seizure. Some people recover immediately while others may take minutes to hours to feel like their usual self.

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

<https://www.epilepsy.com/learn/about-epilepsy-basics/what-seizure>

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



New Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Billing

In December of 2020, Congress passed the No Surprises Act (NSA) which bans the practice of "surprise medical billing" and creates new consumer protections.

The Epilepsy Foundation and many other patient advocacy organizations supported this legislation and have been commenting to facilitate its implementation. Surprise medical billing occurs when an individual receives a bill because they saw an out-of-network provider. This usually occurs in two primary circumstances: emergency rooms or planned care. In emergency situations, particularly if people have been transported by ambulance, people may receive care in an out-of-network emergency room. For scheduled medical appointments, services and procedures, people may plan to receive care at an in-network facility but are treated, without their knowledge, by an out-of-network provider. Under either circumstance, because the provider is out-of-network, the insurer either won't pay them or won't pay their full charges. The patient is then billed for the remainder, which can be tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. This practice is also known as "balance billing."

The new law addresses these two scenarios differently. In emergency situations, surprise billing or balance billing is banned. The patient should not receive, and is not required to pay, a bill (other than their regular cost sharing amount) for seeking emergency services in an out-of-network ER. If a person comes to an out-of-network ER and needs to be admitted, the hospital must provide notice that they are out-of-network and assist the patient to find an in-network hospital and facilitate transportation. The hospital cannot do this until the patient is stabilized. If a person is seeking planned care, the facility must notify them if the facility or one of their providers is out-of-network. If the patient still wants to seek care, they must sign their consent to be billed.

For uninsured patients, the facility is required to provide a "good faith estimate" of the charges. For insured patients, facilities are not yet required to provide a "good faith estimate" of the charges but they will be in the future.

These new consumer protections took effect January 1, 2022.

For people with epilepsy, it is important to know your rights.

Learn more here. <https://www.cms.gov/nosurprises>



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 Barbara Coleman, ESSWFL's new Executive Director.



Barbara Coleman joined Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida in April, 2019, as their Community Outreach Coordinator. Upon the retirement of Kevin Lindberg, Executive Director, in December 2021, Barbara was appointed the new Executive Director to replace him. She will provide leadership to Epilepsy Services and will work in partnership with the Board of Directors to ensure the organization fulfills its mission through programs, fund-raising, epilepsy prevention, first aid and awareness, along with board and staff development.

Barbara has an extensive background in Non-Profit Administration, Health & Wellness Program Development, Customer Service, and Sales and Marketing. She has a degree in psychology from UCLA, along with several health and wellness certifications. She worked for 10 years for the YMCA in Wisconsin and Minnesota and developed several health and wellness programs for them, particularly for Seniors and individuals with cancer and Parkinson's disease.

Barbara also has vast experience in Interior Design and enjoyed helping people with their home design needs, doing so for businesses and eventually owning her own business.

Barbara is passionate about helping adults in our community that have epilepsy and no insurance. Helping reduce the stigma associated with epilepsy is also a strong focus of hers, and Barbara feels that knowledge is power. The more individuals know about epilepsy, the more they can help and support those who suffer from this chronic condition.

Kevin Lindberg did an excellent job during his 8 year tenure as Executive Director and Barbara hopes she can fill "the big shoes" he has left and will do her best to continue the good work that Kevin accomplished.

If you are reading this, will you get involved in helping us raise funds or spread the word about our services in the 8 counties of Southwest Florida that we serve? Additionally, if you or your organization would like a free presentation about epilepsy, seizures and first aid, please contact Barbara at (941) 953-5988, extension 316.



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 2022 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.

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 Floy Street, Sarasota, FL 34239 and **indicate Epilepsy**



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 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



Services of Southwest
Florida in the memo section.



Thank You!

BE A DONOR TODAY!



Shop at Amazon Smile and support Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida.

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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