



“Learn as if you will live forever, live like you will die tomorrow.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter
Sixteenth Edition-
September/October 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. Please do what you feel is best to protect your health and well-being.

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.

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.



"What's on Your Mind" - a new way to ask your questions or express concerns:

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.

Listed below is a question we received this month.

"My daughter has epilepsy and is starting a new school year. What can I do to help make it a positive experience for her?"

Summer has come and gone. As we wave goodbye to vacations and sunny weather, it's time to welcome the new school year. Living with epilepsy while going to school can pose many challenges. So, thinking about accommodations that you or your child may need in the classroom is key. Whether you are going away to college, or your child is starting their first day of kindergarten, we have a handy list of tips to help make going back to school a success.

Back to school nerves are common for young children, especially for children living with epilepsy. There are ways to ease your child back into a regular school routine that can help keep them calm and find support while away from home:

Kindergarten – Elementary School:

- Routines-it may be necessary to adjust schedules according to mealtimes, bedtime and medication schedules.
- Talk with your child about any concerns they may have about having seizures at school.
- Schedule parent meetings- connect with your child's school about potential needs in the classroom. Talk with their teacher as well.
- Make time for specific appointments such as behavior counselor, therapist, etc. If your child has an IEP (individualized education plan), ensure that this is being followed.

Middle School - High School:

- Attend meetings with your child. Update information with school staff.
- Prioritize Seizure First Aid. Ensure that their friends, potential part-time employers and others around them know how to respond if your child has a seizure.
- Consider scholarships both locally and nationally, for those who have epilepsy.

Higher Education:

- Would you feel more comfortable as a small school or large school?

- Do you feel comfortable managing your seizures away from your family and friends or at home?
- If you are planning to commute to a local college, will you have transportation?
- What services or accommodations does the college have for students with disabilities.
- Does your college have a health center?
- Will you have a roommate?

Get ready for the new school year with these back-to-school tips. If you are looking for more information on how to attend school while living with epilepsy, we encourage you to contact your local epilepsy resource for additional advice and support. We also suggest you and your family learn more about the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities.

For more information on the tips above, you may click on the button below:

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

Tips for Success in School



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 month we are switching gears and featuring information about our agency and what counties we serve.

The goal of the Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida is to assist in the process of empowering our patients toward self-management in order to be able to lead as close to a normal life as possible. With appropriate and effective diagnosis and treatment we regularly experience this outcome.

Epilepsy Services can provide these at-risk patients with medical, prescription and case management services at little to no cost. We are able to pay for these costs because we contract with local neurologists and other medical service providers to obtain the services at greatly reduced prices. Our doctors donate or substantially discount their services as do laboratories, medical suppliers and

pharmaceutical companies. Our program has helped people with epilepsy deal with these issues for over 50 years. We provide critical medical attention including access to consultation with neurologists, diagnostic testing and assistance accessing medications to low income and uninsured individuals. Additionally, we offer case management, referrals to other community services and prevention and educational programs to the community at large.

The counties that we serve: Sarasota, Manatee, Lee, Hendry, Glades, Charlotte Collier and Desoto.

We have 3 case managers, one that works out of the Sarasota and Bradenton offices and two case managers that work out of the Fort Myers office. They offer services to over 475 clients.

If you know of anyone who has epilepsy and no insurance or limited access to medical care and prescription medication, please have them contact us at (941) 953-5988.

There are more people who could use our services if we could generate the additional resources needed to provide them. This is our focus moving forward.

DONATING TO EPILEPSY SERVICES OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA FROM YOUR IRA

Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRAs

The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 (PATH Act) permanently extended the qualified charitable distribution rules which allow IRA owners who have **reached age 70 ½** and older to request that distributions be made from their IRAs and paid directly to a qualified charitable organization without the IRA owner having to recognize ordinary income for federal tax purposes that would otherwise have to be recognized if the IRA owner received a distribution and then donated it to a charity. Qualified charitable distributions do not count towards the IRA owner's adjusted gross income and can be counted towards the IRA owner's required minimum distributions (RMDs).

If you are age 70½ or older, give directly from your IRA

Another way to give to a qualified charity, if you're age 70½ or older, is to give directly from your traditional IRA.

You generally can donate as much as \$100,000 per year directly from your traditional IRAs on an aggregate basis to a qualified charity without being subject to federal income tax on that distribution. It's worth noting, that because you are not taxed on a qualified charitable distribution, you cannot claim the donation as a tax deduction and contributions to supporting organizations and donor-advised funds do not qualify for this tax treatment. (Qualified charitable distributions also can be made in certain limited circumstances directly from your Roth IRA and from a SIMPLE IRA or SEP IRA to which no employer contributions are being made for the applicable year.) Tax deductible IRA contributions after age 70½ may reduce the amount you are able to exclude from your income as a qualified charitable distribution.

"If you are age 70½ or older, donating money directly from your IRA to a qualified charity can count toward your annual required minimum distribution (RMD) and is generally not included in your taxable income," says Debra Greenberg, director, Retirement and Personal Wealth Solutions, Bank of America.

This method allows you to give more efficiently than if you simply took the IRA distribution yourself, paid taxes on it and then donated whatever you were left with, Greenberg says. But be aware that qualified charitable distributions made directly from your IRA are not tax deductible when you file your federal income tax return. If you are taking RMDs, a qualified charitable distribution up to the \$100,000 annual cap can count toward your current year's RMD as long as certain conditions are met. The RMD rules require benefits to commence by age 72 (or 70½ if you reached age 70½ before January 1, 2020). You may defer your first RMD until your required beginning date which is April 1st in the year after you turn age 72 (or 70½, as applicable), but then you'd be required to take two distributions in that year. Failure to take all or part of an RMD results in a 50% excise tax on the shortfall between the actual amount distributed and the RMD amount. **Consult your tax advisor for more information on your personal circumstances.** State and local taxation of a qualified charitable distribution may vary.

Dear Friends of Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida:

August was Make-A-Will Month, and even though August is gone, the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people with epilepsy in Southwest Florida is still here. One of the principal reasons to have a will is to take care of your family and bless the people and charities you care about most. Did you know that 80% of legacy gifts to charity are bequests. A bequest is a simple designation of a specific amount of dollars from your estate/will to go to the charity of your choice. Estate taxes can be complicated and giving to charity in your estate can save on estate taxes (please seek your financial expert's advice).

Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida (ESSWFL) is a unique charity that teams with neurologists who mostly give their services, many pro bono. They make it possible, with other kind donors for epilepsy services to provide free or low-cost medical services that are life changing for people with epilepsy who have no health insurance in Southwest Florida. Anyone who knows anything about epilepsy, knows it is crazy for a person to have epilepsy and not have medication. Think about making a will today and stipulating a legacy gift to ESSWFL! It will make an incredible difference!

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Swanton, MBA, CFRE
Director of Development
Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida
941) 953-5988 Ext. 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 Floyd Street, Sarasota, FL 34239 and **indicate Epilepsy Services of Southwest Florida in the memo section.**

Thank You!

BE A DONOR 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 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





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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