

## GREETINGS FROM OUR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



As we start the year with a new US President, we now know that one of Mr. Obama's main agenda items is healthcare reform. Thus, as we greet the month of February, a healthcare debate will begin in earnest on the many changes likely to occur in the coming months and years which may have a significant impact on the way in which healthcare is delivered. Regardless of whatever health system modifications are implemented, there will be an increased emphasis on quality and its measurement and how to deliver medical care at a lower cost.

In this month's *Epilepsy.com Professionals*, we are highlighting tangible ways in which healthcare reform may impact the care of patients with epilepsy. Two of our hallway conversations this month directly pertain to this issue. On February 12, 2009, **we will be talking to Dr. Jacqueline French** over the increasing issue of generic antiepileptic medications. Second generation antiepileptic drugs are now reaching brand patent maturity. Therefore, an increased number of generic versions of these medications are beginning to flood the marketplace. Despite their low cost, questions arise as to whether there is sufficient efficacy data to show that generic versions are equivalent to the original brand name drugs. Given the substantial differences in price and questions of safety; we hope the interview helps clarify the issues.

On February 19, 2009, Hallway conversations will focus on the development of quality measure indicators for epilepsy. **We will be talking to one of the Co-Chairs of the panel for the development of the epilepsy quality measures for the American Academy of Neurology, Dr. Nathan Fountain** from the University of Virginia. There are eight proposed epilepsy measures pertaining to diagnosis, therapy, counseling and safety which if accepted by the Centers for Medicare of Medicaid services of the US Government, will lead to a requirement for formal documentation that minimum care standards were met at each and every physician/ patient encounter as outlined in these proposals. This issue is important and affects us all. Public comment from physicians, patients and anyone in the epilepsy community will soon open on these proposals in order to make certain that there is a fair and honest vetting before they are implemented. Please download and listen to this interview.

In addition, we will continue to bring you the latest information about new therapies and current events over the course of the month. On February 5, 2009, **we will be talking to Dr. Gregory Krauss** from Johns Hopkins University Medical Center about the recently approved drug, Rufinamide, which is now available in the United States. Lastly, Dr. Eric Kossoff in his Keto News article discusses whether ketosis is necessary for the ketogenic diet, a thought provoking topic.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming epilepsy-related Hallway Conversations, conferences, symposia, and events include:

**February 4, 2009**  
**Hallway Conversations with Dr. Greg Krauss**  
Epilepsy Talk Radio

**February 12, 2009**  
**Hallway Conversations with Dr. Jackie French**  
Epilepsy Talk Radio

**February 19, 2009**  
**Hallway Conversations with Dr. Nathan Fountain**  
Epilepsy Talk Radio

**March 4, 2009**  
**American Clinical Neurophysiology Meeting**  
Lake Buena Vista/Disney World, CA, US

**March 7, 2009**  
**New Grant Opportunities - Application Letter of Intent Due**

**March 24 - 28, 2009**  
**Jasper's Basic Mechanisms of the Epilepsies Workshops**  
Yosemite National Park, CA, US

**March 27-29, 2009**

## Don't Forget New Grant Opportunities – Proposals Due March 7

New grant opportunities are being made available through the Epilepsy Research Foundation's New Therapy Grants Program. These will be awarded to scientific and clinical investigators pursuing innovative projects that demonstrate a clear path to commercialization. To view the request for proposals and to apply, please visit [www.epilepsy.com/etp/grant\\_application](http://www.epilepsy.com/etp/grant_application).

We hope that you find all of this helpful in caring for patients with epilepsy and that in some way we contribute to improving quality of life for all patients afflicted with this condition.

Sincerely,

**Joseph I. Sirven, M.D.**

**Joint Western Clinical  
Neurophysiology Society &  
Southern Epilepsy & EEG  
Society Meeting**

Park City, UT, US

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

**epilepsy.com/Professionals** is building a resource section of useful practice tools for the professional community. If you have a form, patient information sheet, or other useful handout for patients with epilepsy, and you'd like to share it with thousands of your colleagues by adding it to the **resource section of [epilepsy.com/professionals](http://epilepsy.com/professionals)**, please email it to [info@epilepsytherapyproject.org](mailto:info@epilepsytherapyproject.org) or fax it to (540) 687-8066, and we'll take it from there. Thanks!!

## ABOUT THE EPILEPSY THERAPY PROJECT



**Epilepsy Therapy Project**, the sponsor of *epilepsy.com*, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance new treatments for people living with epilepsy. ETP helps scientists develop new drugs and brain stimulators to treat epilepsy. The goal is to fast-track great ideas into treatments to reach people as fast as possible. Your donations go directly toward development of new treatments as well as maintain *epilepsy.com*. Read more about the **Epilepsy Therapy Project**.

The Epilepsy Therapy Project is also the sponsor of [epilepsy.com](http://epilepsy.com) and [epilepsy.com/professionals](http://epilepsy.com/professionals). We are working to build *epilepsy.com/professionals* into the most comprehensive source of information, tools, and interchange available online for patients, practicing neurologists, and for the research and therapy development community.

To learn more about our programs, please visit us at: [www.epilepsy.com/epilepsy\\_therapy\\_project](http://www.epilepsy.com/epilepsy_therapy_project).