

## GREETINGS FROM OUR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



**Happy 2009!**

I am delighted to be serving in my new role as editor-in-Chief of the professional site of *epilepsy.com* and to build on the amazing work of my predecessor. As you may know, the previous editor-in-chief, Dr. Steven Schachter has moved on from this role as he takes over as President of the American Epilepsy Society. My vision for this site is to provide the most up-to-date and current overview of current

events with regards to all aspects of epilepsy news and issues geared to the practitioner who cares for patients with epilepsy and to do this in tandem with the editor of the consumer site of *epilepsy.com*, Robert Fisher, MD, PhD.

Sadly, we start the year with a reminder of how cruel and deadly epilepsy can be. On January 3, 2009, John Travolta's teenage son, Jett, died from a Grand mal seizure in a bathtub in the Bahamas. Mr. Travolta had a history of seizures and had been taking depakote according to published accounts.

For more information, the reader is directed to the following websites.

- [John Travolta's Teenage Son Dies](#)
- [Travolta Death](#)
- [Autopsy completed on John Travolta's son](#)
- [ABC News: Interview with Dr. Orrin Devinsky](#)

Although there are no words of consolation for parents facing such a devastating loss, this tragedy helps to redouble our efforts as physicians and health care workers at finding better ways to prevent seizures and its consequences.

As we look to the upcoming year, hope remains as new therapies become available. Recently, two new anti-epileptic drugs, Rufinamide and Lacosamide were approved for use in the US. In addition, potential new stimulation devices are a step closer in becoming a reality for patients with seizures. Over the course of 2009, readers of *epilepsy.com* will notice several gradual changes. There will be an increased emphasis on podcasts from epilepsy thought leaders. Several new additions to the "Hallway Conversations" Series will debut. Guest columns on new drugs, devices and other hot

[Listen to Dr. Sirven's message.](#)  
(MP3 file)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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

**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

**April 15-17, 2009**  
**Antiepileptic Drug Trials X**  
Coral Gables, Florida, USA

topics will be forthcoming.

New on the website, take a look at the **latest Keto News article** authored by Christina Bergqvist, MD. She offers the Top 10 Scientific Articles on the Ketogenic Diet for 2008. This is a fascinating summary and will help us all understand how to employ the diet in the management of patients with seizures.

### **Announcing 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/research\\_programs](http://www.epilepsy.com/etp/research_programs).

My goal for the professional site of *epilepsy.com* is to keep all practitioners updated. I am excited, as we move forward, to continue to publish interesting articles that will be helpful to those who are in practicing clinicians so as to preserve and better the lives of patients with epilepsy.

**Sincerely,**

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

## **WE NEED YOUR HELP**

[epilepsy.com/Professionals](http://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**



The **Epilepsy Therapy Project** is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation. The organization was founded by parents of young children with epilepsy, along with their children's doctor, a leading researcher and clinician in the field of epilepsy. Our mission is to advance new treatments for people living with epilepsy.

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](http://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).

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