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## Epilepsy widespread but overlooked

Burlington County Times

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Epilepsy affects one in 10 Americans, including more than 129,000 individuals in New Jersey. This is approximately as many people as those who have cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease - combined. Yet this disorder still largely remains a mystery to many.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition characterized by recurring seizures. The majority of individuals with epilepsy can control their seizures with proper medical care and medication and go on to live healthy, uninterrupted lives.

However, people with epilepsy face several major hurdles to achieving this goal. Myths and misunderstandings have created a stigma against epilepsy, and this disorder continues to be a private burden for many. Americans with pre-existing conditions are being denied health coverage, making quality health care inaccessible for many who have epilepsy. And uninformed medication switches create critical risks for patients with epilepsy, including breakthrough seizures and toxic effects that can cause loss of license or employment, injury and even death. November marks Epilepsy Awareness Month, and the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey seeks to put a stop to these barriers. Health care must be made available to all Americans, regardless of pre-existing conditions or disorders. Our elected officials in the New Jersey Legislature have got to pass legislation that will protect patients with epilepsy from having their medications switched without notification. And we all need to promote awareness, discussion and understanding of epilepsy and end the silence of this disorder.

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November 30, 2009 01:20 AM

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"Epilepsy affects one in 10 Americans"..doe s that mean that have the disease or they know someone who does?

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On behalf of the 3 million Americans living with epilepsy, please join me in supporting these efforts.

**Liza Gundell**  
 Deputy director  
 Epilepsy Foundation of N.J.  
 Trenton

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