

Public Health Awareness

Shedding Light On Epilepsy

(NAPSA)—While it may come as a surprise to many, Atlanta Falcons running back Jason Snelling has had to struggle against an unseen foe on his way to becoming a success in the National Football League. Snelling has epilepsy, and when it comes to waging a successful battle against the disorder, he is not alone.

Snelling is one of a growing number of talented and accomplished members of the African-American community who are in the public eye and are now talking about their experiences with epilepsy. Others include recording artist and performer Prince and actor and director Danny Glover.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that from time to time produces brief disturbances in the normal electrical functions of the brain. These recurring disturbances are called seizures, which can happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Snelling was diagnosed with epilepsy as a teenager, but he didn't let it stop him from becoming a standout athlete at the University of Virginia or playing professionally for the Falcons.

He is shining a light on epilepsy to educate others and dispel the myths associated with it.

"I hope that by sharing my story, I will encourage more people to talk about epilepsy and those with the condition to take a more active role with their doctors to better manage their care," said Snelling. "I'm excited about working with organizations like the Epilepsy Foundation because they provide support and information to help people who have seizures participate in all life experiences."

Of special concern for the Foundation are the challenges faced by those with epilepsy in the African-American community. According to the Foundation,



Celebrities, like Atlanta Falcons' Jason Snelling, are spreading the word that epilepsy shouldn't define what a person can accomplish.

African-Americans are more likely to be diagnosed with epilepsy than Caucasians. Recently, a research team at the University of Cincinnati found that access to specialists and to anti-epileptic drugs is limited within the African-American community. But even more damaging than a lack of access to care can be the myths and mysteries surrounding epilepsy. ~~And lack of~~ understanding by those impacted by epilepsy contributes to a fear of exposure and discrimination for those with the condition.

To help shed light on epilepsy, the Foundation, through its affiliate network across the country, offers programs and services ranging from summer camps to legal services and employment support. The Epilepsy Foundation also provides resources to educate first responders, caregivers, school nurses, seniors, youths and parents about the condition. As the largest nonprofit funder of epilepsy research, the Foundation is helping to increase the number of qualified scientists who are searching for a cure to the condition.

Visit www.epilepsyfoundation.org and knowthedifference.org to learn more.