



# Health Awareness

## Empowering Over Epilepsy: Alan Faneca's Story

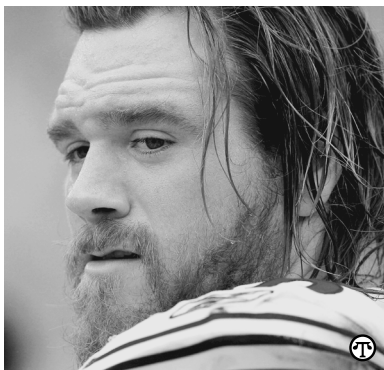
(NAPSA)—At age 14, when Alan Faneca was diagnosed with epilepsy, he refused to allow the condition to prevent him from realizing his dream of becoming a professional football player. Alan worked closely with his neurologist to create a plan to manage his condition that still enabled him to maintain an active lifestyle. Eventually, with his seizures under control, Alan demonstrated athletic talent and a furious competitive spirit on the high school and college football fields.

Today, Alan is a six-time, All-Pro offensive guard with the Pittsburgh Steelers. He never allows epilepsy to enter his thoughts while on the field. His coaches and teammates handle him in the same way they approach other players.

"When I was diagnosed with epilepsy, I said I was going to do whatever I had to in order to manage the seizures so I could live life as normally as possible," explained Faneca. "I know if I don't follow my treatment plan, I put my own health in jeopardy. With a wife, new baby and teammates all depending upon me, I have good reasons to stay healthy and seizure free."

### About Epilepsy

Today, more than 3 million Americans of all ages have epilepsy. It is the most common neurological condition in children and the third most common in adults after Alzheimer's disease and stroke.



Alan Faneca

Epilepsy produces seizures, which happen when a brief, strong surge of electrical activity affects part or all of the brain. When a person has two or more seizures, he or she is considered to have epilepsy.

Currently, there is no known cure; however, there are several treatment options for people with epilepsy, including anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs), surgery, a ketogenic diet and vagus nerve stimulation. Although medications will not cure people of epilepsy, they do control seizures in the majority of patients—like Alan. It has been estimated that at least 50 percent of all patients with epilepsy who take AEDs as prescribed gain complete control of their seizures for substantial periods of time.

"Epilepsy is terribly misunderstood and, as a result, people living with it are often wrongly judged and rejected," explained

Eric R. Hargis, president and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation. "We are grateful that Alan and other high-profile people who are impacted by epilepsy are willing to speak out. We strongly encourage their participation as they are the key to eliminating the mystery and fear that has far too long surrounded this condition."

### 2008 National Walk For Epilepsy

One way the Epilepsy Foundation, in partnership with Ortho-McNeil Neurologics, Inc., is working to minimize the stigma associated with epilepsy is through the National Walk for Epilepsy.

This 5K walk will be held on March 29, 2008, in Washington, D.C. with the goal of raising more than \$1 million for epilepsy services, education, advocacy and research. The event is designed to bring the epilepsy community together to demonstrate camaraderie, strength and success.

Greg Grunberg, star of the hit NBC television show "Heroes," and father of a child with epilepsy, will serve as the chairperson of this exciting event. Greg and his family are inviting people to save the date and join them in the nation's capital, where more than 7,000 people are expected to walk in honor of those affected by epilepsy.

For more information about epilepsy and the National Walk for Epilepsy, visit [www.walkforepilepsy.org](http://www.walkforepilepsy.org).