

New Hope for Help in Managing Epilepsy

(NAPSA)—Mitchell Ryan goes about his day with confidence and self-assurance, but that wasn't always the case. For years, Mitchell's epilepsy impacted his daily life, sometimes causing him to endure seizures that lasted as long as eight hours. With epilepsy, there is no clear warning that a seizure is about to begin, and Mitchell was unsure how this disruption in his brain activity might affect him. Under his doctor's care, Mitchell tried numerous medications and underwent brain surgery in an effort to control his seizures.

Today, Mitchell manages his epilepsy with behavioral modifications and medication, and has been free of seizures for more than 10 years. "After so many years of having seizures, I have finally found something that helps control my seizures so I can enjoy my life," said Mitchell. At age 21, he lives on his own, holds a full-time job and spends time fishing and boating.

One of the oldest and most common neurological conditions, epilepsy is characterized by seizures, which are caused by a sudden change in how brain cells send electrical signals to each other. Seizures are classified as "generalized," originating in both sides of the brain simultaneously, or "partial-onset," starting in one area of the brain. Seizures vary from a momentary disruption of the senses to short periods of unconsciousness or staring spells, to convulsions.

"Epilepsy and the brain's complex chemistry present a considerable challenge in bringing seizures under control. New uses for anti-epileptic medications provide hope that more people with epilepsy will have the chance of being success-



fully treated early in the treatment process," said Dr. Tracy Glauser, director of the Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

Epilepsy affects more than 2.7 million Americans and each year in the United States, approximately 200,000 people are diagnosed with epilepsy for the first time. Doctors treat this disorder primarily with seizure-preventing medicines. Although these medications are not a cure, they control seizures in the majority of people with epilepsy.

Anti-epilepsy medications, or neuromodulators, are selected based on seizure type; however, the specific seizure type may not always be obvious at the time of diagnosis. It's important that people talk with their doctor about medications that provide coverage for both partial-onset and primary generalized tonic-clonic seizures if the diagnosis is unclear. These treatments offer doctors an option in situations where differentiating between these seizure types is difficult.

For more information about epilepsy and treatment options, call 1-800-682-6532 or visit www.ortho-mcneilneurologics.com.