



**TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA ASSOCIATION
NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS SUPPORT GROUP
July 2004**

The 2004 Senior Health Expo in the Mid-Cities area was a success despite the weather. LeRoy, one of our support group members, came by our booth and reported it's been 5 years since his MVD and he's still pain and medication free. He also helped pass out literature.

If you haven't registered to attend TNA's 5th National Conference, November 11-14, 2004 in Orlando, make sure to do so before the registration fee goes up on August 17th. You can register on-line at www.tna-support.org or if you need a conference registration form, let me know and I'll be happy to mail one to you. Since our National Conferences are only held every-other-year, make sure you don't miss out!

If there is something you want to learn more about, feel free to write, phone, fax, or e-mail me at: 604 Aberdeen Way, Southlake, TX 76092, phone (817) 416-7202, fax (817) 416-9871, kayser-wilson@charter.net.

Shelly Wilson
Support Group Leader & National Conference Chairperson

PFIZER TO PAY \$430 MILLION FOR FALSE DRUG MARKETING

MIAMI (Reuters) May 13 - Pfizer Inc. has agreed to pay \$430 million and plead guilty to criminal charges for illegally marketing an epilepsy drug for unapproved uses, such as migraines and pain, U.S. prosecutors said on Thursday.

The allegations were made in a lawsuit filed in late 1996 by whistle-blower David Franklin, who had worked for the maker of epilepsy drug Neurontin, Warner-Lambert, before it was acquired by Pfizer in 2000.

The U.S. Department of Justice and attorneys general of all 50 states agreed to the settlement.

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Franklin, who filed his whistle-blower suit after resigning from Warner-Lambert in 1996, accused the company of using a variety of schemes to illegally pump up sales of Neurontin, a drug that remains one of Pfizer's biggest sellers with 2003 sales of \$2.7 billion.

According to court documents, a May 1996 voicemail message from a top marketer to so-called "medical liaisons" in the Northeast was like a call to arms: "When we get out there, we want to kick some ass, we want to sell Neurontin on pain."

Under federal regulations, companies may market and promote drugs only for uses approved by the Food and Drug Administration, although doctors are allowed to prescribe drugs to treat other uses. Companies have been increasingly scrutinized by regulators for "off-label" marketing.

"This is a big chunk of money, and sends a warning shot to the drug industry that companies and their sales representatives had better be careful not to promote unauthorized uses of their medicines to doctors," said David Moskowitz, an analyst for Friedman, Billings, Ramsey & Co.

Pfizer said in a statement that "the allegations and conduct pertain solely to Warner-Lambert practices" before it was acquired by Pfizer.

According to court documents, Franklin accused Warner-Lambert of hiring an outside firm to write at least 20 articles for medical journals that extolled unauthorized uses of Neurontin and then paid doctors for use of their names as authors of the reports.

The strategy allowed the drugmaker to hide its role in promoting the off-label usages, Franklin charged in his lawsuit. Moreover, Franklin told investigators that Warner-Lambert trained its sales representatives how to hype unauthorized uses of Neurontin, including one meeting in which a senior company official suggested what to tell doctors. "We need to be holding their hand and whispering in their ear, 'Neurontin for pain, Neurontin for monotherapy, Neurontin for bipolar, Neurontin for everything' " according to a 2002 New York Times story detailing Franklin's allegations.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Boston, which spearheaded the case, will receive \$240 million of the settlement for criminal violations of the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act. Another \$152 million will be distributed to the states and federal government for Medicaid violations. Other sums will be distributed to state health agencies and departments, while \$28 million will be used for a national advertising campaign and remediation program to be overseen by state attorneys general.

The settlement won't have a big financial impact on Pfizer, the world's largest drugmaker. Pfizer had more than \$45 billion in sales last year and already set aside the money needed for the settlement.

Source: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/477629?src=mp>

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SENIOR Rx SUPPORT, INC.

The single largest problem in Health Care is the lack of affordable prescription medicine. Senior Rx Support can help you if you can not afford the cost of prescription drugs or if your income is from Social Security, welfare or disability or if you are classified low to middle income.

Your medication will be available to you if you qualify as follows:

- The applicant does not have insurance coverage for outpatient prescription drugs.
- The amount of the applicant's Social Security income creates a hardship when purchasing medication.
- The applicant does not qualify for a government or third party program which provides for prescription medication.

There is a yearly \$20.00 application fee and a service fee for each medication of \$5.00 per month billed annually at \$60.00.

For more information, call Senior Rx Support at 972-387-0427.

POWER OUTAGE

Ordinary toothbrushes work just as well as the motorized kind. Nearly 60% of dentists use manual brushes on their pearly whites, a survey by the Chicago Dental Society reveals. When used correctly, the old-fashioned cleaners are as effective as electric ones. Hold yours at a 45-degree angle to your gums and scrub gently for about two minutes.

Source: Self, June 2004

MIGRAINES

Larry reported he has been having some atypical pain lately, as well as more migraines than usual. A couple of weeks ago, he was having both at the same time so he took some Excedrin Migraine and not only did it stop the migraine, but it also shut down the atypical pain! Since then, he has taken it four more times when he was having atypical pain and it shut it down, all four times.

Right now, Larry is not on any TN medication. However, he is taking Cilantro.

He also mentioned he did not let his pain get severe before taking the Excedrin. His pain pattern seems to get worse throughout the day if he doesn't do anything.

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We appreciate Larry taking the time to pass along this information to our support group – especially since he’s been getting amazing results.

If you have a tip to share with our support group, please e-mail it to Shelly Wilson or kayser-wilson@charter.net or call 817-416-7202 with the specifics.

HANDICAPPED PARKING

Wanda’s friend suggested she inquire about a handicapped parking tag because when the weather is cold, windy, or rainy, it plays havoc with her TN. So, Wanda got an application from the Denton County Government Center where she gets her license tags, filled out the form and took it to her last doctor visit. The doctor signed the form and had it notarized for her before she left the office.

Wanda doesn’t intend to use it unless the weather requires it but she mentioned it is nice to know that she won’t be stuck inside for days at a time due to the weather since she can now park up front at the stores.

Wanda reported the instructions on the back of the form specified neurological problems as one of the requirements. She hopes by passing this along to our support group members, others who need it can avail themselves of this tag.

Thanks Wanda for the tip! If you have a tip that you would like to share with our support group, please e-mail it to Shelly Wilson at kayser-wilson@charter.net or send a written note to 604 Aberdeen Way, Southlake, TX 76092.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Thanks to everyone who’s provided us with their e-mail address. This saves on our mailing and copying costs. If you have an e-mail address where we can send this newsletter and any updates, please e-mail Shelly Wilson at kayser-wilson@charter.net

Just a reminder, if you change your e-mail address, please let Shelly know.

UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBERS

Lillian had a MVD by Dr. White with UT Southwestern in late June. She’s doing great and hasn’t had TN pain since the MVD.

Even though Inez couldn’t attend the last Tyler support group meeting, she called to report that since she had read in our newsletter some two years ago about taking Vitamin B-50, she started taking it. She has been getting 60 tablets of B-50 from Wal-Mart for \$3.84 and has been taking it for eighteen months. She normally has had severe pain

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attacks in November or December and then again in March. Last year, she only had a few pain strikes late in the year and has not had any pain as of March this year. She is sold on taking B-50!

Ramona, the Tyler support group leader, is taking the liquid supplement Perfect B, three times daily. She gets it at Wal-mart for \$11.55 and it has really helped her with anesthesia dolorosa. She takes ½ a teaspoon before a meal. (It doesn't taste bad at all.)

Remember Linda, one of our TN support group members, who was featured in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram article about TN a year or so ago? She had a MVD a couple of months back by Dr. Tony Whitworth at UT Southwestern in Dallas. She reports that she had suffered with TN for twelve years and had four previous destructive TN surgeries before having a MVD. She hasn't had TN pain since her MVD. She recommends Dr. Whitworth and noted he gave her excellent care. *Thank you, Dr. Whitworth!*

Vickie sent us an update. She had a MVD by Dr. Kopitnik at UT Southwestern in Dallas last December. She's doing fine and no longer taking TN medication. She still has a little numbness on the tip of her tongue and every once in a while, a small pain under her tongue (not a shooting sharp pain). She feels like a real person again. Hurray!

Note: Dr. Kopitnik left UT Southwestern at the end of last year and moved to Casper, WY. He now practices with Central Wyoming Neurosurgery.

Holly's still in a lot of TN pain. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

Also, please continue to keep Jill in your prayers as she continues to have a difficult time with a life-threatening, non-TN related health issue.

If you would like to share an update with our group, please let Shelly know about it.

MEETING NOTES

Fort Worth Meeting – May 18, 2004: Notes will be in our August newsletter.

Dallas Meeting – June 2, 2004: For a variety of reasons, our TN meeting was cancelled.

1. Our guest speaker, Dr. Herzog, regretted that he had to cancel due to storm damage but has offered to come present to our group at a later date.
2. Dallas support group members had trees down in their yards preventing them from attending and several members were without power.
3. More bad weather was expected on the night of our meeting – including heavy rains and hail.

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FUTURE MEETING DATES

Dallas at Zale Lipshy Hospital – 8/4, 10/6, 12/1
Fort Worth at Baylor All Saints – 7/20, 9/21, 11/16
Tyler at East Texas Medical Center – 7/21
Waco at Hillcrest Hospital – 7/12, 9/14, 11/1

TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning Balance 6/6/04		\$3936.76
Donations Received	\$557.95	
Copies	9.74	
Long Distance	22.12	
Postage	104.90	
Supplies	<u>75.89</u>	
Total Expenses	<u>\$212.65</u>	
Ending Balance 7/1/04		\$4282.06

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Local TNA chapters *do not receive* funding from the national office. If you would like your tax-deductible contribution to go toward our local chapter, please make your check payable to the order of Trigeminal Neuralgia Association and in the memo field put North Central Texas chapter, then mail it to Shelly Wilson, 604 Aberdeen Way, Southlake, TX 76092.

Please remember to also support the efforts of the Trigeminal Neuralgia Association's national office. Typically, they are the first ones to make contact with new TN sufferers. They provide us with convention materials, run the national website, promote research, and a host of other activities.

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association
2801 SW Archer Rd., Gainesville, FL 32608
Phone: 352-376-9955, Fax: 352-376-8688
www.tna-support.org

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