



Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan Announces Changes to Professional Advisory Committee

Dr. Andrew Zillgitt to lead committee; additional appointees named

SOUTHFIELD, Mich., Jan. 19, 2023 – Andrew Zillgitt, DO, head of the Adult Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at Corewell Health in Royal Oak (formerly Beaumont), has been elected the new Chairperson of the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, effective Jan. 1, 2023.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan's professional advisors work to serve the epilepsy community in Michigan and advance the mission of the Foundation. They are a group of medical professionals whose training, expertise and interest in epilepsy enables them to advocate publicly for epilepsy causes and provide policy guidance, technical and other assistance to the Board of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.

[Dr. Zillgitt](#) is a native of Monroe, Mich. and attended the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. His clinical interests include innovative treatments of drug-resistant epilepsy and cutting-edge neurodiagnostics and neuroimaging. In a previous role as the medical director of the neuromagnetism laboratory and co-director of an epilepsy monitoring unit, he helped advance the clinical use of magnetoencephalography and neuroimaging methods to improve surgical implantation and treatment strategies

Dr. Zillgitt replaces long time Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan PAC Chairperson, [Gregory Barkley, MD](#). For 24 years, Dr. Barkley lead the PAC and was a member of the board of directors. Dr. Barkley is the interim chair of neurology at Henry Ford Health and has been with the hospital for 40 years.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have some of the best epileptologists in the country right here in Michigan to serve and advise the epilepsy community," said Brianna Romines, Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan president. "Dr. Zillgitt is a dear friend to the epilepsy community and a brilliant epileptologist. This moment is also bittersweet as we thank Dr. Barkley for his tireless devotion and lifetime of service to those suffering from seizures. The Foundation simply would not be what it is today without Dr. Barkley."

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan also announced two additional appointees to the PAC:

- [David Burdette, MD](#), of Corewell Health West (formerly Spectrum Health) in Grand Rapids, has been appointed Adult Vice Chair. Dr. Burdette serves as section chief, epilepsy for Corewell Health West. His clinical interests include neurotelemetry, treatment of refractory epilepsy, treatment of status epilepticus and electroencephalography (EEG).
- [Nancy McNamara, MD](#), of C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, has been appointed Pediatrics Vice Chair. Dr. McNamara specializes in pediatric epilepsy and is the co-director of the Pediatric Epilepsy Surgery Program.

Epilepsy in Michigan

Based on national data, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan estimates the following:

- There are almost **109,000 people in Michigan who currently have epilepsy** (13,600 of whom are children).
- More than 30,000 of these individuals continue to have seizures despite treatment. This is called drug resistant, refractory or intractable epilepsy.
- In the Metropolitan Detroit area alone, there are more than **50,000 people who currently have epilepsy** (about 6,250 of whom are children). Almost 15,000 of these individuals continue to have seizures despite treatment.

Facts About Epilepsy

- Epilepsy is the general term for a variety of neurological conditions characterized by recurrent unprovoked seizures. A seizure is a brief disturbance in the electrical activity of the brain that causes temporary changes in movement, awareness, feelings, behavior, or other bodily functions.
- Approximately 3.4 million Americans and 65 million people worldwide have epilepsy
- Epilepsy is greater in prevalence than cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease **combined**
- 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy in their lifetime
- It is estimated that up to 50,000 people die annually in the U.S. from seizures and related causes, including sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP), status epilepticus (non-stop seizures), drowning and other accidents.
- Epilepsy imposes an annual economic burden of \$28 billion on the U.S. in associated health care costs and losses in employment, wages and productivity

Media Interviews Available

To request an interview from Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan president, Brianna Romines, or a member of our PAC, or to learn more about the impact of epilepsy on the Michigan community, please contact:

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About the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan

For 75 years, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan has led the fight to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures and save lives. The Foundation provides services, supports and advocates for the almost 109,000 people in Michigan living with epilepsy. We also work to educate and engage the broader community on seizure safety and general awareness to help break down barriers that still surround epilepsy. Established in 1948, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan is the only statewide nonprofit organization focused on epilepsy. For more information, [please click here](#).

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