



BRAIN ANEURYSM
FOUNDATION

Raising Awareness. Ending Fear.™

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Marking Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month in September, BAF Advocates for More Research Funding Through "Ellie's Law"

(Hanover, MA – August 15, 2017) It is often described as “the worst headache ever.” This is a common warning sign that someone may be suffering a brain aneurysm, a weakened arterial wall that, if it ruptures, causes bleeding and damages the brain.

Each year, brain aneurysms cause nearly 500,000 deaths worldwide. Researchers estimate that six million (one in 50) Americans have an unruptured brain aneurysm. The annual rate of ruptured aneurysms in the United States is about eight to 10 in every 100,000 people, or about 30,000 people a year. Every 18 minutes, a brain aneurysm ruptures. And when it does, death or lifelong disabilities often result.

September is Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month and the Massachusetts-based Brain Aneurysm Foundation will mark the month by awarding funding for medical research and advocating for the passage of Ellie’s Law, legislation that would authorize \$25 million in federal funding for brain aneurysm research.

“Our efforts to raise awareness about the health consequences of brain aneurysms take place all year, but Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month helps spread the word about risk factors, warning signs and the latest research efforts,” said Brain Aneurysm Foundation Executive Director Christine J. Buckley. “There is a crucial need in the U.S. for increased funding for brain aneurysm research.”

Based in Hanover, the nonprofit Brain Aneurysm Foundation is the globally recognized leader in brain aneurysm awareness, education, support, advocacy, and research funding. This year, the foundation is awarding over \$400,000 in funding raised from private donations and events to support medical research. But significantly more funding is needed.

“Ellie’s Law” (H.R. 1648), introduced in U.S. House of Representatives, would authorize \$25 million in federal funding for brain aneurysm research, an increase that is vital to understanding how brain aneurysms develop and finding effective new ways of detecting and treating them.

The bill’s namesake, Ellie Helton, was 14 years old when she died on July 16, 2014 as a result of a brain aneurysm. Her family recalls the Cary, N.C., girl as a girl who “loved God, family and friends, superheroes, Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups and pizza.”

The proposed bipartisan legislative effort led by Representatives Yvette Clarke, a New York Democrat, and Patrick Meehan, a Pennsylvania Republican, would provide the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke \$5 million per year for five years to conduct or support further comprehensive research on unruptured brain aneurysms.

The warning signs of a ruptured aneurysm include a headache – described by survivors as “the worst headache of my life” – dilated pupils, blurred vision, pain near the eye, weakness and numbness and difficulty speaking.

Almost one year ago, WCVB-TV reporter Bob Halloran suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm. Thanks to the quick intervention of passersby and immediate treatment, Halloran survived and, following extensive rehabilitation, has returned to work.

“I am one of the lucky ones, thanks to my family, my doctors and everyone who has helped me get stronger by the day,” said Halloran. “I consider it a privilege to speak for those who cannot and add my voice to the call for an increase in brain aneurysm research funding in order to learn all we can to defeat what’s been called a ‘silent killer.’”

Halloran, who earlier this year received a Champion Award from the foundation, was treated by a team led by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center neurosurgeon Christopher S. Ogilvy, MD, co-founder of the Brain Aneurysm Foundation.

“Brain aneurysms take a devastating toll each year across America and throughout the world,” said Ogilvy. “Thanks to the work of the Brain Aneurysm Foundation and the commitment of survivors like Bob Halloran, we can increase public awareness of this lethal condition. Through additional research, we can learn more about brain aneurysms and work toward new treatments that save lives.”

In addition to the warning signs, the Brain Aneurysm Foundation highlights risk factors that include: smoking, high blood pressure, a family history of aneurysms, traumatic head injury, excessive alcohol use and drug use (particularly cocaine). Women, people of color, and individuals over 40 are at higher risk.

“We urge people who may be at risk or experience symptoms to speak with their physician,” said Buckley. “If you’re experiencing a headache that hurts like no other, don’t wait for it to go away — seek immediate medical care. And we urge you to please join the foundation, brain aneurysm survivors and caregivers, and the families of those who did not survive as we mark Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month this September and work to expand research focused on saving lives.”

ABOUT THE BRAIN ANEURYSM FOUNDATION

Founded in Boston and now based in Hanover, Massachusetts, the Brain Aneurysm Foundation is the globally recognized leader in brain aneurysm awareness, education, support, advocacy, and research funding. The foundation’s mission is to provide information about and raise awareness of the symptoms and risk factors of brain aneurysms to prevent ruptures and subsequent death and disability; work with medical communities to provide support networks for patients and families; and advance research to improve patients’ outcomes and save lives. Established in 1994, the foundation is led by Executive Director Christine Buckley and has a Medical Advisory Board that comprises more than 30 of the nation’s foremost aneurysm experts — neurologists, neurosurgeons, interventional neuroradiologists, and other brain aneurysm specialists from the country’s leading hospitals and universities. **For more information about the Brain Aneurysm Foundation, visit www.bafound.org.**