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# The Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota Shifts Focus of Balloon Event Back Onto People with Epilepsy

*May 15 "Rise Above Seizures" Event to be Modified*

**St. Paul, MN – April 10, 2014** – The Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota (EFMN) is modifying plans for its May 15 "Rise Above Seizures" balloon release. The event was intended to raise public awareness and honor the 60,000 people in our community with epilepsy, but has been overshadowed by a debate between balloon manufacturers and vocal environmental groups.

The Foundation conducted due diligence via phone and email with the MN Pollution Control Agency and the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in January and February, and would not have moved forward with the event if advised about legal or major environmental concerns. This week, these agencies are speaking out against the event and the Foundation has decided on modifications.

On May 15, EFMN will not sponsor any balloon launches. Instead, the Foundation will encourage people to get creative with their free balloons and send in photos/videos of how they're honoring loved ones with epilepsy. The Foundation envisions balloon sculptures, school children making art projects and more. More details will be posted on efmn.org.

"EFMN is a small non-profit trying to do big things," said Executive Director Vicki Kopplin. "We regret that an event designed to bring awareness to our important cause has been caught in the crossfire of an environmental debate that we are not qualified to enter. We heard the public's concerns and made the decision to modify our event. Negative stigma already exists around this cruel condition and we're putting a positive focus back on people with epilepsy."

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**About the Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota**
The Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota (EFMN) envisions a world where people with seizures realize their full potential. One in 10 people will have a seizure in their lifetime, and 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy. The Foundation's programs and services cover MN and Eastern ND. For information, visit efmn.org.

**About Epilepsy**

- Epilepsy is common – 60,000 people in MN have epilepsy, also known as a seizure disorder. Epilepsy affects more Americans than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson's disease combined.

- While it is estimated that one in 26 Americans will develop the seizure condition in their lifetime, current treatments for epilepsy do not work for more than three out of 10 children and adults diagnosed -- leaving many Americans with no or inadequate control over their daily seizures and with the risk of further injury or fatality.