



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

July 21, 2007

Dear Fellow Governors:

Earlier this month I met with a remarkable young woman who told me of her experience with a dreadful but little-known medical condition called Stevens Johnson Syndrome (SJS). It is a severe allergic reaction to medication – *any medication* – including such seemingly innocuous, everyday drugs as ibuprofen.

In fact, it was just such an over-the-counter pain reliever that caused 10-year-old Elizabeth Boxer of Glastonbury to spend 10 days in Connecticut Children's Medical Center last summer, five of them in the hospital's intensive care unit.

According to the New England Journal of Medicine, some 2 million Americans are hospitalized every year from these types of severe allergic reactions – and some 150,000 of them die. That is why I am writing you today and asking you to join me in helping to raise awareness of this terrible condition.

SJS and a related condition, Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis Syndrome (TENS), often strike without warning because the victim usually is unaware of an allergy to the medication until it is used. The most common allergies are to antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and anticonvulsants.

Victims often suffer a rash, blisters or red blotches on the skin, a persistent fever and flu-like symptoms. They may have blisters on the mucous membranes of the mouth, eyes, nose and genital area. The skin begins to slough away, risking infection. Treatment is much the same as it would be for victims of severe burns.

Many in the medical community, while aware of SJS and TENS, consider it a relatively rare condition – yet adverse drug reactions, including SJS and TENS, are actually the fourth leading cause of death in our country, behind heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The most effective way to fight this debilitating illness is public awareness. The sooner victims seek treatment the better their chances for recovery. I have declared August "Stevens Johnson Syndrome Awareness Month" in Connecticut and I am asking each of you to join me in similar efforts to raise awareness about SJS and TENS.

More information is available at the Web site [www.sjssupport.org](http://www.sjssupport.org), including copies of proclamations issued by a number of Governors. These can easily serve as templates for similar statements from your offices.

Thank you very much for considering this request. Elizabeth and her family would like nothing more than to prevent another child from suffering the same painful ordeal she has endured.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jodi Rell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name and title.

M. Jodi Rell  
Governor  
State of Connecticut