

HEALTH ALERT!

“Allergic Reaction” May Actually Be Unusual Swelling Disorder

(NAPSA)—Attacks can come at a moment’s notice. The signs may include debilitating abdominal pain or facial swelling that can render a person unrecognizable to even close friends and family. This is the threat and fear that people with hereditary angioedema (HAE) live with daily.

Even experienced physicians can mistake the symptoms of HAE for allergic reactions, appendicitis or colitis. An estimated 6,000 to 10,000 Americans have HAE. Living without an accurate diagnosis can make those struggling with the symptoms feel helpless and alone. In an effort to increase understanding of this disease and the rate of accurate diagnosis and access to approved therapies, the Hereditary Angioedema Association (www.haea.org) is working to promote awareness of HAE.

“Educating physicians and the general public about HAE is the first step,” said Janet Long, patient and HAEA executive vice president. “It is possible for those with HAE to successfully manage their condition with proper diagnosis and treatment.”

A rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of a protein in the blood called C1 esterase inhibitor, HAE can result in episodes of severe swelling in various body parts including the hands, feet, face, gastrointestinal tract and airway. HAE abdominal attacks are often extremely painful and characterized by intestinal swelling, vomiting, nausea and limited mobility. When involving the airway, swelling can obstruct breath-



Hereditary angioedema patient, Amanda Dillon, before suffering an attack.

ing and lead to suffocation. While HAE attacks can occur without warning, stress, physical exertion, minor trauma, surgery, and illnesses such as cold and flu are known to be triggers.

Until recently, there were no approved treatments for HAE in the U.S. Now, Food and Drug Administration–approved therapies are available to treat HAE attacks.

Without treatment, the painful and debilitating attacks can last from three to five days; now, with the help of appropriate therapy, the pain and swelling can be well-managed and patients’ lives can be transformed.

You can learn more about the condition and treatment options from your doctor and from the HAE Association at www.haea.org or (866) 798-5598.