



spotlight on health

Progress Against Pain

(NAPSA)—Scientists say there may be hope and help for the estimated six million Americans who suffer from a painful condition called Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome—and for the millions more who may develop it some day.

The disease results from trauma injury and can last a lifetime.

Consider the case of Jennifer Watkins, Miss Pennsylvania USA 2001. When she was 15, she slid into second base and broke her ankle. Nearly a decade later she's still in pain. After the accident, her hands turned blue and became extremely painful, cold, and then paralyzed. The condition spread to the rest of her body and ultimately put her in a wheelchair. At one time, her mother had to feed and dress her each day.

Explains Tom Haederle of Johns Hopkins: "If Hell were a clinical medical condition, it might look something like Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy or RSD. The disorder actually goes by many names, but they all describe the same thing: a constant, intense burning pain in a limb that, once begun, never goes away. The slightest touch, even a slight breeze, can bring agony. The affected limb often becomes swollen. Many people have difficulty moving it at all."

RSD is difficult to diagnose and there is no known cure. Miss Pennsylvania USA has been helped by a rigorous regimen of physical therapy, chiropractic care, exercise and a healthy and controlled diet.

Although she still has relapses into pain, for the most part she is "feeling wonderful" she says, and



Miss Pennsylvania USA 2001 Jennifer Watkins suffers from chronic pain. Fortunately, she and those like her can be helped.

keeping busy. In addition to her duties as Miss Pennsylvania, she is Director of Marketing for a rehabilitative clinic and has started an RSD support group.

She advises others with similar problems, "If you think you have something like RSD, don't give up until it's correctly diagnosed and treated. Get help for you and your family and have faith. You can survive."

You can also learn more from the Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association of America, a non-profit organization that promotes awareness, support, and research about RSD. For information on how the association can help you or you can help it, see www.rsds.org or call (203) 877-3790.