

PRESS RELEASE

Congress has designated July 22 as National Fragile X Awareness Day and declares support for increased funding*

In the true spirit of bipartisanship, Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, Senator John Edwards (D-NC) and Republican Senator, Chuck Hagel (R-NE), led the effort to declare July 22 as National Fragile X Awareness Day in a year 2000 Congressional proclamation.

Five years later, in a time of increasing political polarization, that bipartisanship has continued with both the House and Senate showing their concern for individuals with fragile X syndrome, the world's leading cause of genetically inherited mental impairment and the most common known cause of autism. In an effort again led by Senators Hagel and Edwards, and with new support from Representatives Radanovich (R-CA) and Sandlin (D-TX) in the House, over 100 members of Congress have expressed their support for a significant increase in research funds allocated for fragile X at the National Institutes of Health, and the appropriation of five million dollars for the establishment of a first-ever, public health program devoted to fragile X at the Centers for Disease Control.

Fragile X Syndrome

- Millions of Americans are impacted by the medical condition fragile X syndrome.
- Fragile X syndrome has been identified as the most common, known cause of autism.
- A mother or a father can be a carrier, and both boys and girls can have fragile X syndrome.
- There is a simple DNA blood test for fragile X syndrome.
- Interventions exist that improve the lives of those affected by fragile X syndrome.
- Approximately one-third of male carriers of fragile X syndrome, above the age of 50, may develop a recently discovered neurological condition called Fragile X-associated Tremor Ataxia Syndrome (FXTAS) – a condition frequently misdiagnosed.

What is fragile X syndrome?

Fragile X syndrome is the most common inherited form of learning disabilities and mental impairment known. Inherited in an X-linked fashion, fragile X syndrome can cause intellectual and cognitive deficits ranging from subtle learning disabilities and a normal IQ, to severe mental retardation and autistic behaviors. Approximately one in 250 women and 1 in 800 men carry the gene that, when inherited by their children, can cause fragile X. In addition to mental impairment, children with fragile X syndrome can be characterized by a group of symptoms, including physical features, specific behavior patterns, developmental delays, and speech/language delays.

The vast majority of families affected by fragile X are unaware of its presence and the majority of children and adults with fragile X have never received a diagnosis. Individuals with mental retardation of unknown cause, or learning and behavior problems combined with several of the symptoms described above, should be tested for fragile X.

Learn more about fragile X syndrome, or find a parent contact in your area, by contacting the **National Fragile X Foundation**: 800-688-8765 / NATLFX@FragileX.org / www.FragileX.org

*Congressional Record, 7/12/00, Volume 146, Number 89.