



Proclamation

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease, is a devastating disorder that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscles. Muscles grow progressively weaker until paralyzed, and death usually occurs within three to five years. A common first symptom of ALS is a painless weakness in a hand, foot, arm or leg, which occurs in more than half of all diagnosed cases. Other early symptoms include difficulty speaking, swallowing or walking. The disease typically strikes adults in the prime of their life. Its cause is unknown, and no cure has been found.

Currently, more than 30,000 Americans suffer from ALS, and 5,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. At least 90 percent of these cases strike people with no family history of the disease, and in advanced stages, patients require 24-hour nursing care costing up to \$200,000 annually.

In Hawai'i, approximately 24 new cases are reported annually, and on average, 74 people in our state have the disease at any given time. These patients, as well as those affected by other neuromuscular diseases, receive medical care from free clinics located at Castle Medical Center, Maui Medical Group, Kaua'i Medical Group, Hilo Medical Center and Kona Life Care Center.

Each year, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) designates May as *National ALS Awareness Month* to ensure all members of the public understand the signs and deadly effects of ALS, as well as to emphasize the importance of finding a cure.

On May 19, the MDA will host a free ALS seminar at Queen's Conference Center, featuring guest speakers and demonstrations to raise awareness and support the services, research and information programs of MDA's ALS division.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and **I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.**, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim **May 2007** as

ALS AWARENESS MONTH

in Hawai'i, and urge our citizens to support the efforts of MDA and other organizations to treat and combat ALS in our state.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this thirtieth day of April 2007.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i

James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i