

STATE OF OHIO

Executive Department

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Columbus

IN RECOGNITION OF TAY-SACHS AWARENESS MONTH

Tay-Sachs is a rare, inherited disorder that causes progressive destruction of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord (the central nervous system) due to insufficient activity of an enzyme called beta-hexosaminidase A. The disease is always fatal in children.

The disorder was first identified by British ophthalmologist Warren Tay in 1881 and American neurologist Bernard Sachs in 1887.

The genetic mutations that cause this disease are more common in people of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, and in certain French Canadian and Louisiana Cajun populations. Tay-Sachs is an autosomal recessive disorder and both parents must carry the mutated gene in order to have an affected child. When both parents are carriers, there is a 25 percent chance with each pregnancy that the child will be affected with Tay-Sachs disease.

There is no treatment for Tay-Sachs disease. Even with the best of care, children with Tay-Sachs disease usually die by age 4.

Tay-Sachs most often appears in families with no prior history of the disease. A simple blood test can distinguish Tay-Sachs carriers from noncarriers. Tay-Sachs carrier testing is vital for individuals in high-risk populations who are planning to have children. Genetic counselors can assist individuals and families understand genetic testing and provide education about inheritance, testing, management and research.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TED STRICKLAND, Governor of the State of Ohio, do hereby designate

November 2007

as

Tay-Sachs Awareness Month

throughout the State of Ohio and encourage all Ohioans to understand the importance of genetic testing and the need for research.

On this 1st day of November 2007,



Ted Strickland
Governor

