



# CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

## Transcript

### **Dr. Gerberding's Address at CFS Awareness Campaign Launch**

Hi. I'm Dr. Julie Gerberding, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I wish I could be there in person to celebrate with you the launch of this important public awareness campaign on chronic fatigue syndrome, which unfortunately continues to rob way too many people of the quality of life we all wish we could achieve. As the nation's health protection agency, CDC has been researching CFS for years and we've really learned a lot. For instance, we know that CFS affects four times as many women as men and is the most prevalent among adults in their 40s and 50s, but it can develop at any age, although it's very rare in younger children. CFS is at least as common among African-Americans and Hispanics as it is among whites. It's a disabling disease, as disabling as other severe chronic conditions like multiple sclerosis, or c.o.p.d. and rheumatoid arthritis. CFS takes a huge toll on our national economy, with lost productivity due to CFS totaling more than 9 billion dollars a year in the United States alone. And with each passing day we learn more. In April of 2006, a group of scientists led by CDC's Drs. William Reeves and Suzanne Vernon published some ground breaking research suggesting a biological basis for CFS. Really, for the first time we have very sound evidence indicating that people with CFS have certain genes and experience certain gene activity that makes them more prone to not being able to effectively cope with both psychological and physiologic challenges that they encounter during life. This research will lead to more effective therapies for people with CFS. As we continue to learn more and more about this illness we want clinicians as well as people who suffer from CFS to know about current treatments which rely on a combination of strategies to deal with the most problematic symptoms. Working together, patients and health care professionals can achieve positive improvements in function and quality of life throughout all stages.

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I hope the information presented here and available on CDC web site will encourage you to learn more about CFS to help improve diagnosis and treatment and reduce the suffering associated with this illness. The Department of Health and Human Services, CDC and our partners, including the CFIDS Association of America, thank you for your interest and efforts to raise awareness about chronic fatigue syndrome. Together, we can make a difference. Thank you.