

National Multiple Sclerosis Society



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Mission

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society mobilizes people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS in the pursuit of a world free of multiple sclerosis.

Strategy/Approach

To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world and connects people with MS and their families to Society and other programs, services, resources, and information in order to move their lives forward.

The research approach of the National MS Society is both comprehensive and focused to help people with MS live their best lives. In order to make successful progress the Society focuses its priorities in three areas:

- **Progressive MS** -- Focused efforts and global collaboration will facilitate answers for progressive MS so that people can live their lives without the uncertainty of what tomorrow may hold.
- **Nervous System Repair** -- The concept of nervous system repair, including myelin repair, holds significant promise in repairing the damage and restoring the function that MS impairs.
- **Wellness and Lifestyle** -- In addition to drug treatments, people with MS gain in quality of life through improved rehabilitative techniques, exercise, diet, and complementary therapies.

The National MS Society established a unique funding mechanism, **Fast Forward, LLC**, to accelerate commercial development of promising research discoveries. This funding model is an integral component of the Society's comprehensive approach to MS research and treatment. Through Fast Forward, the Society:

- connects university-based MS research with private-sector drug development
- bridges the gap between promising discoveries and pre-clinical development necessary to begin clinical trials
- funds small biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies to develop innovative new MS therapies and repurpose FDA-approved drugs as new treatments for MS.

Research Portfolio

The National MS Society supports and funds research activities spanning all multiple sclerosis focused research stages,

including early discovery research, translational research, commercial drug development and clinical trials. Funding opportunities include:

- **Research Grants** – Multi-year investigations by university-based scientists and clinicians for basic, clinical, and rehabilitation research
- **Patient Management, Care And Rehabilitation Research Grants** – Support for research projects focusing on improving clinical care and symptom management
- **Collaborative MS Research Centers** – Five-year grants to interdisciplinary teams of researchers to stimulate cross-pollination of ideas and attract new minds to the field of MS
- **Commercial Drug Development Partnerships** – Milestone-based funding to seed early-stage companies and academic groups preparing to start a company or license technology
- **Pilot Research** – Funding for one year to test innovative, cutting-edge ideas or untested methods and gather sufficient preliminary data to apply for longer-term funding
- **Health Care Delivery And Policy Research Contracts** – Multi-year projects to investigate aspects of healthcare delivery and health policy issues related to people with MS
- **Training Grants and Fellowships** – To attract and train promising young investigators and doctors and help more established investigators learn new techniques
- **Special Awards and Prizes**—prizes for researchers who are conducting high-impact work.

Partnership Practices

The Society is a leader in driving collaborations and fostering partnerships across sectors to accelerate progress in MS research. Examples include:

- [MS Outcome Assessments Consortium](#), bringing together stakeholders from industry, academia, MS advocacy groups, FDA and EMA to spur development of better clinical trial tools to assess the benefits of potential therapies for all forms of MS.
- Collaboration with Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation and Beyond Batten Disease Foundation supporting a shared resource for screening and discovering drugs against nerve degeneration.
- Founding member of the [Progressive MS Alliance](#), an international alliance of organizations working together to connect resources and experts to end progressive MS.

Through its commercial alliances, the Society partners with biotech and pharmaceutical companies. Examples include:

- **EMD Serono/Merck KGaA** – Created the Collaborative Fund, which aims to speed drug development through the MS pipeline through mutually agreed upon seed-to-early-stage projects. Under the terms of the collaboration, EMD Serono/Merck KGaA will have the option to in-license these programs at their completion.
- **Axxam SpA** – In partnership with JDRF and the MS Society of Italy, jointly funded the use of Kv1.3, a channel inhibitor, as a small molecule immune therapy for treatment in MS. This unique partnership was a first between cross-disciplinary patient advocacy organizations.

- *Established the MS field of nerve and myelin repair which resulted in trials for treatment.*
- *Set standards in diagnosis, symptom management, pediatric MS, complementary and alternative medicine, rehabilitation research, clinical trial strategies and stem cell research.*
- *Drove research uncovering genes contributing to MS susceptibility and new treatment avenues.*
- *Recruited more than 800 new MS researchers to the field.*
- *Provided early career support and funding to nearly every thought leader in MS research.*
- *Increased awareness of the many symptoms of MS and ways to address them to improve quality of life.*

Financials

The National MS Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The financial information available includes combined information from the society and its chapters. The most recent information is from 2012.¹

Year ending 9/30/2012:

- Revenue: \$216,363,554
- Total Assets: \$87,543,979
- Medical Research Grants: \$43,255,235
- Gifts received: \$204,999,321
- Expenditures: \$218,943,020

Key Accomplishments

- In 2013 alone, the Society invested nearly \$50 million to support more than 380 new and ongoing research projects around the world while providing program services to over one million people.
- Partnered on 19 commercial research projects with \$9M invested to date
- Completing a five-year, strategic alliance with EMD Serono/Merck KGaA to speed drug development through the MS pipeline through mutually agreed upon seed-to-early-stage projects; \$5.2M committed to date.
- Commercial Research Portfolio Outcomes – helping to attract follow-on funds to promising research initiatives. For example, subsequent to Society’s investment:
 - *Apitope International -- achieved licensing and development agreement with Merck Serono.*
 - *Amplimmune – achieved development partnership with Daiichi Sankyo for autoimmune diseases; AstraZeneca (MedImmune) acquires Amplimmune.*
 - *Canbex -- completed two funding rounds and is now commencing Phase I clinical trial.*
 - *DioGenix – obtained Series B financing.*
- The National MS Society’s \$820 million research investment has fueled many of these advances. A few examples include:
 - *Paved the way for all existing therapies – none of which existed 20 years ago.*

Leadership

The National MS Society is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a senior leadership team, and research selection involves Scientific and Advisory Boards/Committees, along with scientific Peer Review Committee volunteers from around the world.

- **President and CEO:** Cynthia Zagieboylo, cynthia.zagieboylo@nmss.org
- **Chief Marketing & Development Officer:** Graham McReynolds, graham.mcreynolds@nmss.org
- **Chief Advocacy, Services and Research Officer:** Timothy Coetzee, Ph.D., timothy.coetzee@nmss.org
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Other Information

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¹ Information obtained from 2012 Annual Report, March 2014.
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/about-the-society/annual-reports/index.aspx>