

Wellness

It's no secret that wellness plays a large role in quality of life. However, not all wellness aspects that apply to the general population will be true for those living with MS. Last year, the National MS Society put a spotlight on wellness, defining it as self-directed lifestyles, activities, and behaviors that individuals choose and practice themselves in order to improve their health and how they feel about themselves. Currently, more than \$15 million has been allocated to multi-year research projects exploring different areas of wellness including diet, physical activity, and emotional well-being.

DIET

Maintaining a healthy diet is important for everyone. Researchers are currently making significant connections concerning diet, which may eventually impact the lives of people with MS. A well-balanced diet is critical for sustaining health, and this is highlighted by a recent study out of Oregon Health & Science University which found a relationship between adolescent obesity in teenaged girls and MS development. Another study is currently investigating whether or not a hormone elevated by obesity is responsible for the increase in MS susceptibility, but the underlying fact remains that maintaining a healthy diet and weight can possibly help stave off disease.

Furthermore, research has shown that lower levels of vitamin D could be a risk factor for developing MS. Eating foods high in vitamin D, such as mushrooms, egg yolks, and fatty fish, is one way to increase your levels of the vitamin, as well as taking a vitamin supplement approved by your doctor, and spending a few minutes of time in the sun each day when possible.



EXERCISE

Some days it can be hard to drum up the motivation to work out, but moving can improve physical and mental well-being! Evidence suggests that regular physical activity can help improve balance, cognition, depression, and fatigue. Recent studies have shown that weight training can improve gait, which is also related to improved quality of life. Additionally, memory training studies have shown improvements in people living with MS, and these learning enhancements lasted at least six months post-study. These results are indicative of the potential impacts of programs created by the National MS Society aimed at physical and mental exercise, such as Exercise & MS and CogniFitness, respectively.

Exercising can have long lasting effects physically, but getting regular physical activity has also been shown to help ease anxiety and stress, which aids in overall emotional health. Although some aspects of personality are inborn, it is possible to learn positivity. Utilizing stress reduction and coping techniques can help individuals and families bounce back from the challenges of MS. The Society offers several programs that address these needs, like Everyday Matters and Beyond Diagnosis, and having research-backed information will greatly increase their possible impact on people's lives.



With multiple studies currently underway, the understanding of the relationship between wellness and MS is becoming clearer. There is still some distance to cover, but the National MS Society is devoted to helping people with MS by investing in wellness strategies to help keep lives moving forward.

For more information on wellness and MS, visit nationalMSSociety.org/wellness.

BREAKING NEWS IN MS RESEARCH

Earlier this year, the National MS Society committed another \$25.3 million to support an expected 60 new MS research projects and training awards. This financial commitment is the latest in the Society's relentless research effort to expand investments and worldwide collaboration to accelerate research, investing a projected \$54 million in 2016 alone to support over 380 new and ongoing studies around the world. While we're driving the scientific breakthroughs that will propel the knowledge to end MS, we're identifying everyday solutions that change the lives of people with all forms of MS.

Role of Vitamin D in Childhood

Dr. Amy Lovett-Racke and researchers at Ohio State University are seeking to determine if low vitamin D in early life increases the risk of developing MS. While the cause of MS is unknown, vitamin D deficiency is emerging as an important risk factor for MS. Studies of migration and sun exposure indicate that susceptibility to developing MS is determined in childhood, although disease onset occurs later in life. The goal of this study is to explore mechanisms related to vitamin D deficiency in mice, for clues to how low vitamin D levels in early life may increase the risk of developing MS. If evidence from this and other studies suggest that early life vitamin D influences susceptibility to MS, it may be possible to reduce the incidence of MS by increasing vitamin D in the diets of children.



Virtual Reality Treadmill to Enhance Mobility and Cognitive Function

Dr. Jeffrey Hausdorff and researchers at the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, Israel and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are conducting a trial to test a rehabilitation strategy that addresses walking and thinking issues in a single, integrated approach. Problems with walking become exaggerated when people with MS try to walk while doing something else (such as talking to a friend). This novel approach combines treadmill training with virtual reality simulations to implicitly teach patients to walk safely, think, and multi-task. This trial could change approaches to MS rehabilitation, leading to better care and quality of life, and lower costs.

Ocrelizumab Granted "Breakthrough Therapy Designation" for Primary-Progressive MS by FDA

Genentech announced earlier this year that the experimental therapy ocrelizumab has been granted "Breakthrough Therapy designation" by the FDA for the treatment of people with primary-progressive MS. This designation can expedite the development and review of therapies intended to treat a serious condition when clinical evidence indicates that the treatment may demonstrate substantial improvement over available therapy. Learn more at nationalMSSociety.org/research.

10 YEARS OF RESEARCH PROGRESS

2006 Tysabri approved in U.S. for treating relapsing MS (sixth MS treatment available)

2010 First trials to repair myelin in people with MS

2012 Launch of International Progressive MS Alliance to speed the development of therapies

2013 Society funds research into whether dietary salt can speed the development of an MS-like disease in mice and may influence immune activity in MS

2015 Over a dozen disease modifying therapies and several symptom treatments available

2007 Society launches Fast Forward to speed treatments to people with MS by partnering with industry to develop new therapies

2011 Society supports controlled study to determine whether vitamin D supplements can reduce MS disease activity

2012 Launch of studies into whether bacteria in the gut influence MS disease activity or risk

2014 Society convenes Wellness conference to map out gaps and opportunities in research and programs to find wellness solutions for people with MS

2015 First trial to show modest slowing of primary progressive MS

Brentwood Research Reception

On December 2, 2015 Golden Circle members and top event fundraisers met at the Brentwood Country Club to learn from world renowned MS researcher, clinician, and recent Barancik Prize winner Philip De Jager, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and Associate Neurologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Dr. De Jager discussed his continuing work through the International MS Genetics Consortium to create a definitive genetic map of MS susceptibility and how he is using the findings from this map to understand the functional consequences of MS genetic risk factors to create potential personalized approaches to predict, treat and ultimately prevent MS. The Chapter would like to extend a special thanks to Stan and Pam Maron and Fern and Bob Seizer for generously co-hosting and underwriting this reception for the past five years.



Larry Winter, Jamey Power, and Chapter President Julie Kaufer

Cultivating new and existing relationships within our community is key to the Chapter's continued ability to provide essential programs and services, fund MS research, and grow the Golden Circle campaign. If you are interested in hosting a salon event at your home, business/country club or other location please contact Elicia Lopez at 310.481.1111 or Elicia.Lopez@nmss.org.



Kate McIntosh, Kerry Slater, and Dr. Philip De Jager

DVF Event Raises Funds for NMSS

On February 25, fashion mogul Diane von Furstenberg, held a star-studded, retail-charity event at her DVF boutique at The Grove in Los Angeles. The event honored actress Jamie-Lynn Sigler, who publicly disclosed her MS diagnosis in mid-January of this year. Sigler, who most notably starred as Meadow Soprano in the HBO series, *The Sopranos*, has been living with MS for the past 15 years. Many celebrities came out to support the starlet, including *Glee* star Lea Michele, Emmanuelle Chriqui from HBO's *Entourage*, and Joanna Garcia. Diane von Furstenberg styled patrons in her imaginative fashions. The event not only raised MS awareness, but 20% of all proceeds went to the National MS Society.



Katie LoBianco, Kate McIntosh, Jamie-Lynn Sigler, Diane von Furstenberg, Jordan Gellar



Named for the Society's founder Sylvia Lawry, the Lawry Circle honors donors who have informed the Society of their intention to help create a better future for the MS community through their will, trust or estate plans.

Planned and deferred gifts provide a strong foundation of funding for the Society. Because all gifts represent an expression of lifetime commitment to the Society, there are no minimum gift levels and membership is for life. Please inform the Society if you have named the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Southern California & Nevada Chapter in your estate plans by calling Kate McIntosh, Major Gifts Officer, at 310.481.1124.

Challenge Accepted, Challenge Met

We are thrilled to announce that, for the 9th year in a row, Golden Circle donors rose to the challenge posed by the Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation and the Steve & Caroline Kaufer Family. With the generosity of hundreds of individuals, family foundations and corporations, the Golden Circle campaign met and surpassed the \$575,000 goal, raising nearly \$600,000 in the final quarter of the year. As a result, Golden Circle raised more than \$2.3 million in 2015!

The Chapter extends its deepest appreciation to the Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation and the Steve & Caroline Kaufer family for their passion, leadership and tremendous support to help create a world free of multiple sclerosis.

Upcoming Local & National Events

May 11 – 14

International Progressive MS Alliance Meeting
San Francisco, CA

June TBD

Closer to a Cure Recognition Event
Los Angeles, CA

June 16

Advanced MS Meeting
Chicago, IL

June 23 – 24

Research Programs Advisory Committee Meetings
Washington, D.C.

August (first week)

Bloomingdale's DKNY Fall Fashion Event
Sherman Oaks, CA

September 24

Bike MS: Vegas Challenge
Las Vegas, NV

September 29

Dinner of Champions
Los Angeles, CA

November TBD

Golden Circle Research Reception
Los Angeles, CA

November 4 – 6

Challenge Walk MS
San Diego, CA

November 10 – 12

Society Leadership Conference
Denver, CO

November 12

MuckFest MS
Chino, CA

National MS Society Southern California & Nevada Chapter

The Southern California & Nevada Chapter has seven offices serving 20,000 people with MS and their loved ones in Southern and Central California and Nevada.

For more information, call (800) 344-4867 and visit www.nationalMSSociety.org/cal.

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