



(NAPSA)-Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. MS destroys connections, divides minds from bodies, pulls people from their lives and away from one another. Therefore, it's only fitting that connections would be its greatest enemy. Connections help individuals address the challenges of MS and move their lives forward. Connections break down barriers around the world and help researchers pursue the best science to stop MS, restore function lost and end MS forever.

Such connections have helped move MS in just two decades from being an untreatable disease to one for which there are at least 12 disease-modifying treatment options for relapsing MS, the most common form of MS. Such connections also unite nearly 100 nations around the globe each May for World MS Day to raise awareness about how MS affects the lives of more than 2.3 million people.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is a driving force in this effort to connect everyone committed to creating a world free of MS, devoting more than \$52 million to support 380 research projects internationally while providing services to more than 1 million people annually.

Science is moving at an incredible pace. The approach to research needs to be open, flexible and



Actor Shemar Moore participates in Bike MS in honor of his mom, Marilyn Wilson-Moore, who has MS.

holistic, tapping into the expertise of scientific advisers who identify gaps and opportunities, and the MS community who provide topics that matter most to them. Key research priorities are progressive MS, nervous sys-

tem repair, wellness, and genetics and environmental risk factors for MS.

Progressive MS: The Society is focusing on the next frontier in MS research, finding solutions for people experiencing worsening disability that characterizes progressive MS, for whom there are few treatment options. The Society led an international effort culminating in the creation of the International Progressive MS Alliance, a growing global initiative to end progressive MS, which is already funding 22 research grants across nine countries as part of an ambitious program to allocate at least \$30 million over the next six years to find solutions for progressive MS. The Society is also investing in strategies to protect the nervous system from injury, and in advanced imaging techniques and other biomarkers to track progression and the success of therapies.

Nervous system repair, recovery and wellness: Repairing myelin may represent the best strategy for protecting nerve fibers from injury and improving function for people with MS. Thanks in part to the Society's pioneer funding, potential cell therapies and myelin repair strategies are now approaching or already in clinical trials. Recovery can take other forms, and the Society is supporting more than 30 studies of new exercise, rehabilitation and other nonpharmaceutical pro-

grams to address symptoms and restore function. It also recently launched a Wellness Initiative and is formulating priorities to drive research and programs aimed at helping people with MS live their best lives.

Genes/Environmental Risk Factors: Researchers are starting to drill down into how genes and the environment interact to cause MS and possibly to influence the course of the disease. This area is ripe for additional efforts and could lead directly to new therapeutic targets for treating the disease and also eventually for preventing MS.

This remarkable progress being made in understanding and treating MS is propelled by people like you who combine their efforts, knowledge and hope to create connections that can become more powerful than the connections MS destroys.

You can make meaningful connections at www.nationalMSSociety.org, where you will find expert MS information, connect and share with others, download tools to spread MS awareness, or register for Society events. Whether you volunteer, bike, walk, advocate or support, every connection you create unites you with people around the world in the MS movement and moves us closer to a world free of MS.

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