THIS ISSUE:
INNOVATIVE HOUSING FOR THOSE LIVING WITH MS

Page 20

PREGNANCY AND MS
WINTER 2013

Jennifer Ganley
East Hartford
Diagnosed in 2012.
Wishing you joy and peace throughout the holiday season.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society Connecticut Chapter
CHAIRPERSON’S MESSAGE

You probably know that there are roughly 6,000 people in the state of Connecticut living with multiple sclerosis. And maybe you heard the statistic about there being more than 2.1 million people worldwide who are affected by MS. But, you probably are not aware of everything that the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter, has accomplished in the past year to help all people battling this disease.

I’ll start with a few of our larger events. Through your participation in Walk MS, Bike MS: Red Thread + Steelcase Ride and Bike MS: Cardio Express Ride, the Connecticut Chapter raised millions of dollars for the fight against MS. In fact, this year, participants in the Bike MS: Red Thread + Steelcase Ride went above and beyond, raising more than $578,000, exceeding the set goal of $539,000 by nearly $40,000. In this issue, we will break down the top fundraisers from across the state at our fundraising events and send a final thank you to all of the sponsors who helped us along the way (pages 13 – 15).

In addition, the Connecticut Chapter’s 2013 fiscal year played host to two tasting events, The Greater Hartford MS Taste of Hope and the Greater New Haven MS Taste of Hope; two Women Against MS Luncheons, one in Hartford and another in Old Greenwich; and the 2013 Connecticut Executive Choice Awards. After each of these events, we were moved by the support of our dedicated volunteers, donors and participants. Without your continued passion for meeting the needs of those in our state battling MS, we would not be able to continue to offer help, guidance and aid through our programs and services. Because of your efforts in fiscal year 2013, the chapter was able to host more than 40 programs to benefit Connecticut residents living with MS.

We have also witnessed the National MS Society filter close to $5 million back to our state, supporting in-state research initiatives.

The Connecticut Chapter is committed to supporting the wishes of its members, and was tuned in to the needs and requests of our local community. In direct response to a need made known by Connecticut residents, our fearless leader Lisa Gerrol continued to work diligently on a project that began in 2011. With the support of the governor’s office, the Department of Social Services, Connecticut senators and regional officials, this fall we hope to break ground on the Simsbury Specialty Housing Project, a three-story housing facility designed specifically for people with multiple sclerosis (see page 20 for details).

As this year comes to a close, the society is busy looking forward to what lies ahead. So let’s continue momentum from 2013 into the new year. Not forgetting what is behind, let’s push forward to what is ahead – a world free of MS.

John W. “Jack” Betkoski, III
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Multiple sclerosis is more prevalent in women of childbearing age than in any other demographic. When a young woman is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, one of the first questions almost always revolves around the effects of the illness on pregnancy, and vice versa. Just a month before Jennifer Ganley, 32, and her husband, Jeff, had planned to start trying for a family, Jennifer received the life-changing news that she had relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis, an illness with potentially debilitating symptoms, that when exacerbated, presented her with numbness and tingling in her hands and chronic pain in her lower back.

“When I was diagnosed, I actually was well aware of the effects of the illness,” remembered Jennifer, a Clinical Specialist with St. Jude Medical, Inc. “My mother’s best friend has MS. Growing up, I saw MS rob her of more and more mobility. Initially, I was a wreck. I thought my life was over. All I could envision was living my life in a wheelchair and being cheated of what I wanted most – a family.”

Newly Diagnosed, East Hartford Woman Presses Forward; Baby Makes Three For 2014 Walk MS

By Karen E. Butler, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations
“We really wanted to stick to the plan; we didn’t want my diagnosis to rob us of our commitment to begin a family…”

— Jennifer Ganley
Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease of the central nervous system. It is an unpredictable condition in which symptoms can be relatively benign, or, in worst case scenarios, disabling. Some individuals with MS may be mildly affected, while others may experience various degrees of paralysis. More than 6,000 Connecticut residents, like Jennifer, battle the erratic and often baffling effects of multiple sclerosis.

Immediately following her diagnosis, Jennifer, who lives in East Hartford, began researching the possible risks associated with pregnancy and multiple sclerosis. She brought her questions and concerns to her neurologist Peter Wade, M.D., Director of Neurology at the Mandell Center for Multiple Sclerosis. He assured her that she and Jeff could still have a family, even in the face of MS.

According to the National MS Society, pregnancy does not appear to speed up the course or worsen the effects of MS. And there is no evidence that MS causes infertility. Several studies of large numbers of women have repeatedly demonstrated that pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the incidence of fetal complications are no different in women who have MS than in control groups.

Women are generally advised to stop treatment using disease-modifying medications one to two menstrual cycles prior to trying to conceive. In Jennifer’s case, she decided to delay ongoing therapy for her MS until after she has her child.

“We really wanted to stick to the plan; we didn’t want my diagnosis to rob us of our commitment to begin a family a year after our marriage,” said Jennifer. “I was diagnosed last October and the next month we started trying. In April, I received the exciting news that I was pregnant.”

Before 1950, most women with MS were counseled to avoid pregnancy because of the belief that it might worsen the effects of their MS. However, studies show the opposite is true. In most cases pregnancy actually reduces the number of MS exacerbations, especially in the second and third trimesters.

“It was amazing; almost as soon as I realized I was pregnant, most of my symptoms vanished,” exclaimed Jennifer. “Until then, every day I was reminded that I have MS. My symptoms were constant. My pregnancy has provided a reprieve from the numbness and tingling, the pain and the overwhelming fatigue associated with MS.”

Jennifer is receiving prenatal care at S.H.E. Medical Associates, an affiliate of Saint Francis Healthcare Partners, located in Hartford.

“Pregnancy is known to be accompanied with an increase in a number of circulating proteins and other factors that are natural immunosuppressants,” said Elizabeth Jensen, certified nurse midwife and advanced practice nurse with S.H.E. Medical Associates. “In addition, levels of natural corticosteroids are higher in pregnant than nonpregnant women. Researchers believe these may be some of the reasons women with MS tend to do well during pregnancy.”

Jennifer, who is due in December, has little apprehension about postpartum issues, even though she understands exacerbation rates tend to rise in the first three to six months after giving birth. The risk of a relapse during the postpartum period is estimated to be 20 to 40 percent. However, studies indicate relapses do not appear to contribute to increased long-term disability. One study showed that using IV steroids once a month for the first six months after delivery seemed to reduce the relapse rate compared with controls. However, there was no difference in neurological function or progression, and steroids have their own side effects. Most doctors in the U.S. do not practice as standard procedure the use of IV steroids or other medications, such as IV immunoglobulin, after delivery and during the postpartum period.

According to Jensen, the only special concerns faced by pregnant women who have MS center around gait difficulties, as women with MS may find these worsen during late pregnancy when the mothers-to-be become heavier and their centers of gravity shift. Increased use of assistive devices may be necessary, and may include the use of a wheelchair at times. Bladder and bowel problems, which occur in all pregnant women, may be aggravated in women with MS who have a pre-existing urinary or bowel dysfunction. Pregnant women with MS may also be more subject to fatigue during the last few months of pregnancy.

Jennifer plans to breastfeed her newborn. There is no evidence that breastfeeding increases relapses. Doctors recommend, however, that mothers with MS avoid the use of disease-modifying drugs because, as with many other
medications, it is not known if these drugs affect breast milk and ultimately, the child.

Researchers believe MS has a genetic component. However, the chance that a child born to a parent with MS will himself develop MS is quite slim. Studies indicate that children of women with MS have a three to five percent lifetime chance of developing multiple sclerosis. In other words, the odds are 24 to one against having MS.

“Jeff and I are trying to take things one day at a time,” said Jennifer, who will celebrate her second wedding anniversary in November. “We are hoping for the best, but preparing for anything, including relapse. Fortunately, our extended families live nearby, so we have a strong support system.”

Within a few months after her diagnosis, Jennifer was making plans to attend Walk MS. Collaborating with her mother, Lois Gottlieb, to form a fundraising team proved to be empowering for the newly pregnant mom-to-be. Expecting to raise just a couple thousand dollars, her 76-member team went on to raise almost $10,000 for the 2013 event.

“At first I was apprehensive to share with friends, past and present, my diagnosis of MS,” said Jennifer, with a smile. “However, when I announced to my friends on Facebook that I had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, the outpouring of support has been moving and powerful. The news, difficult as it is, has served to help me reconnect with friends with whom I hadn’t spoken with in years. Their words of encouragement and demonstrations of support give me hope.”

Jeff and Jennifer are looking forward to next year’s walk, when baby will make three.

“I look forward to introducing my newborn to his or her very first Walk MS,” said Jennifer, who already has arranged for daycare, as she plans to return to work after maternity leave. “We’re in this together. I couldn’t ask for a more supportive husband and family. My mother came up with our team name, Team Jenga, with the idea that you’re only as strong as your foundation. I’m fortunate to have the best of foundations supporting me and the battle I face. I am not in this alone.”

The 2014 Walk MS will be held at 12 sites across Connecticut Saturday, April 5, and Sunday, April 6. Although one doesn’t have to actually “walk” to participate, the event offers two options, a 2.5 mile-route and a 5-mile route. The fully accessible venues also feature finish line festivities and lunch compliments of Subway Restaurants and Coca-Cola. Last year more than 10,000 participants stepped out or rolled out to raise more than $1.2 million. Funds raised ensure ongoing scientific research to find better treatments and a cure. Funds also provide for the continuation of vital programs and services offered by the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter, to people in the state living with MS.

For more information about pregnancy and MS, visit www.nationalMSsociety.org. For more information or to register for the 2014 Walk MS, visit www.ctfightsMS.org.
**MS Trial Alert: Investigators Recruiting 1,530 People With Secondary-Progressive MS For Study Of Siponimod**

Investigators are recruiting 1,530 people with secondary-progressive MS for a phase 3 study testing the safety and effectiveness of the oral therapy siponimod.

Siponimod is an experimental immune system-modulating therapy designed to be more selective than Gilenya®, which was approved in 2010 for adults with relapsing forms of MS to reduce the frequency of clinical relapses and to delay the accumulation of physical disability.

Participants should be aged 18 through 60, with a diagnosis of secondary-progressive MS. Participants cannot have had a recent relapse treated with corticosteroids. Participants will take the capsules daily for up to 60 months.

Investigators will measure the delay in time to confirmed disability progression, disease activity as observed on MRI scans, scales measuring mobility, relapse rates, adverse events and abnormalities on lab tests.

Local recruitment sites include Danbury, Fairfield and North Haven. The study is funded by Novartis Pharmaceuticals AG. To learn more about the enrollment criteria for this study, and to find out if you are eligible to participate, please call 1-888-669-6682 or visit the phase 3 study listing at clinicaltrials.gov.

**The National Multiple Sclerosis Society Commits $2.5 Million To Support Network Of Pediatric MS Centers**

On July 1, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society committed $2.5 million to support research by the Network of Pediatric MS Centers (NPMSC).

Funding for the nine-center network provides an essential infrastructure to facilitate research, including searching for the cause of MS by studying risk factors for the disease in children. This support for data coordination can be leveraged to answer other important research questions to advance our understanding of the disease in this most vulnerable group.

“The Network of Pediatric MS Centers is a strategic investment that will help us achieve our most important goal – a world free of multiple sclerosis,” said Cyndi Zagieboylo, President and CEO of the National MS Society. “The network will continue to systematically expand to other centers to enhance research efforts.”

**Society’s Research Programs Advisory Committee Meets To Advise On Strategic Issues**

The National MS Society’s Research Programs Advisory Committee (RPAC) met in New York City this June to consider critical research issues and make recommendations regarding research projects and strategic initiatives. Members and guests also heard about progress made through the society’s Fast Forward drug development initiative.

The society’s volunteer peer review committees evaluated the merit and relevance of 173 research applications and found 36 to be meritorious. The RPAC recommended support for all of these projects if funding was available.

Next steps include a study of risk factors that drive progression; critical challenges posed by reduced government support of research; and a new society clinical fellowship program proposed to increase the number of MS specialists.

**Dronabinol Fails To Stop MS Disease Progression**

A study published in the July 2013 edition of The Lancet Neurology reported that a 2012 trial was unable to show the benefits of dronabinol, a synthetic cannabis, in the slowing of the progression of either primary- or secondary-progressive MS.

Although no serious safety concerns were identified, dronabinol was unable to stop MS disease progression or brain atrophy and did not affect the occurrence of disease activity in new areas of the brain. This observation suggests that dronabinol does not protect the brain, at least in the progressive MS population.

The three-year trial was conducted on the basis of previous lab studies suggesting that the synthetic cannabis may protect the nervous system.

Researchers have not yet tested dronabinol’s ability to protect the brain during earlier stages of MS.

**Pregnancy Registries For MS Medications Published**

In August 2002, the Food and Drug Administration issued guidelines requiring drug manufacturers to develop pregnancy registries to monitor women who were pregnant or became pregnant while taking medication.
Because MS primarily affects women of childbearing age who can become pregnant unintentionally, the FDA considered it extremely important to acquire information about how MS disease-modifying medications can affect pregnancy and unborn children.

The National MS Society recently published a link to the completed pregnancy registries for the MS medications Avonex®, Betaseron®, Rebif® and Tysabri®.

Registries for the MS medications Aubagio®, Gilenya® and Tecfidera® have been established, and physicians are encouraged to enroll pregnant women in these active registries.

Researchers Explore a Possible Biomarker That May Help Predict MS Disease Progression

Having a simple test that can reliably predict the course and progression of a disease would greatly inform treatment decisions, but so far, such a test does not exist for MS. However, in a study co-funded by the National MS Society, a step in that direction was recently taken.

California researchers Sergio Baranzini, M.D., Ulf Schulze-Topphoff, M.D., and colleagues examining a molecule called Tob1 found that mice that were genetically engineered to be missing Tob1 in their CD4+ T cells had an earlier onset of the mouse model of MS, known as experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis, or EAE. Their disease was also more severe and longer-lasting than in mice with normal levels of Tob1.

This study offers new evidence that the Tob1 molecule associated with immune cells has potential as a promising biomarker that could indicate people who are likely to progress to full-blown MS after a first attack. The study also opens up possibilities for new therapeutic interventions in which increasing Tob1 could possibly prevent further development of MS after an initial attack, or reduce disease activity in people who already have MS. Additional research is needed to verify and expand these findings.

For more information on these research briefs, visit www.nationalMSsociety.org.
In October the National MS Society awarded $518,000 in research funding to The Mandell Center for Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research. The grant will fund a three-year study on how upper extremity capacity and impairment affects a person with MS abilities to perform day-to-day activities. Long-term, the study aims to inspire innovative rehabilitative interventions to improved quality of life for people living with multiple sclerosis.

“The Mandell Center has been building up to this for quite a while,” shared Albert Lo, M.D., Ph.D., who, in addition to serving as Director of Neuroscience Research at the Mandell Center, is one of the co-principle investigators for the study. “This is our first grant from the National MS Society. It is also, to date, the largest that Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital has ever been awarded.”

The center will, by invitation, randomly select 300 participants from the Mandell Center’s 1,400 patients. This large pool of participants will help collect more data and help ensure representation of the individuals seen at the Mandell Center. Historically, most rehabilitation studies involve no more than 200 participants.

“The goal of this study is to look at upper extremity capacity and function in the clinical research setting to learn how that capacity and function relate to a client’s abilities on a day-to-day basis,” explained Jennifer Ruiz, Research Manager at the Mandell Center. “By mapping out how upper extremity issues culminate in daily living, we can begin to identify ways to improve the quality of life for people living with multiple sclerosis.”

In examining existing issues for people living with MS, such as a loss of strength in conjunction with pain, and then studying how those issues affect a patient’s daily functions, such as the inability to pick up a glass, investigators will be able to provide key information to future investigators and inventors developing rehabilitative interventions.

“When a patient visits his or her neurologist, he or she has a list of bodily functions MS has affected; most of the time, upper extremity issues do not make it to the top of that list,” added Elizabeth Triche, Ph.D., co-principle investigator with Lo and who is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Brown University, where Lo also serves as an Associate Professor of Neurology and Epidemiology. “But, that does not make it any less difficult to live with. If someone has a loss of strength, it can affect anything from bathing to eating. This is what we want to look at. We want to identify what is happening now, so that we can begin to look at what intervention treatments need to be put in place.”

The Mandell Center for Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research is named for Joyce and Andy Mandell in recognition of their leadership, contribution and support in establishing and maintaining the center.

For more information on this study, please visit www.nationalMSsociety.org. For more information about Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital’s Mandell Center for Multiple Sclerosis, call 860.714.2149 or visit www.saintfrancisdoctors.com/ms.

We mobilize people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS.

— Mission Statement, National MS Society
Connecticut readers may recognize David S. Rosenblum, M.D., of Gaylord Hospital in Wallingford, as a “Top Doc” from his numerous mentions in Connecticut Magazine’s annual physician reviews. This year, the National MS Society has given the doctor a new title: Partner in MS Care, Rehabilitation Professional.

“Being recognized as a Partner in MS Care underscores my continued commitment and strong connection with the National MS Society,” commented Rosenblum, who also shared that annually, the hospital hosts a wine tasting to benefit the Elizabeth Birney Gagliardi Fund for Multiple Sclerosis, which offers financial assistance to MS patients who need it. “I have worked with the MS community at Gaylord Hospital for many years, and it has truly become a long-standing, personal and professional commitment.”

Rosenblum graduated summa cum laude in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University at Albany, The State University of New York, and received his medical degree summa cum laude in 1987 from University of Buffalo’s School of Medicine and Biological Sciences. He completed his specialty training in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City where he served as Chief Resident.

In 1992 Rosenblum became Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and subsequently in 1998 gained Board Certification in Spinal Cord Injury Medicine – a subspecialty concerned with the evaluation and management of patients with conditions such as MS and diseases/injuries to the spinal cord. He began his work with patients living with MS in 1993 as Director of the Gaylord Hospital Multiple Sclerosis Clinic. Currently, Rosenblum serves at Gaylord Hospital as a treating physician for patients with MS. His current titles include Medical Director of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Medical Director of Outpatient Services, Director of Spinal Cord Injury Research and Site Director of the Model Spinal Cord Injury Program.

In addition to practicing rehabilitation, Rosenblum is an Associate Clinical Professor of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at Yale University’s School of Medicine. He has also authored and edited numerous textbook chapters and articles relating to MS.

Rosenblum has collaborated with the National MS Society to educate the rehabilitation community about MS, and has served on the Board of Trustees of the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter. He also joined the Connecticut Chapter’s Clinical Advisory Committee and previously served as co-chair. Rosenblum served on the chapter’s board until 2012.

“Connecticut Chapter Partners in MS Care abide by strict criteria,” shared Lynette Coleman, Associate Vice President of Programs & Services for the Connecticut Chapter. “Physicians with a particular interest in MS care must have extensive experience and knowledge of MS, must practice within the generally accepted standard of care for MS and must have a strong relationship with the chapter and the MS community. We are very excited to welcome Dr. Rosenblum to the Partners in MS Care community.”

Partners in MS Care is a broad and inclusive initiative which recognizes partnerships with many types of MS healthcare professionals. The goal of the program is to positively impact the quality of MS care and access to that care. Partners include neurologists, mental health professionals, rehabilitation professionals and centers for comprehensive care.

Partners in MS Care Rehabilitation Professionals offer demonstrated knowledge in evaluating and treating people with MS and engage in communication with other healthcare providers treating the patient. These partners also have a strong collaborative relationship with the National MS Society.


For more information on the Partners in MS Care initiative, please contact the Programs & Services Department at programs@ctfightsMS.org or visit www.ctfightsMS.org.
The National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter, will host the 35th Annual MS Dinner of Champions on Wednesday, Nov. 20, at the Hilton Stamford Hotel in Stamford.

Since the first MS Dinner of Champions, the event has honored outstanding corporate leaders and the most prominent champions in sports.

The 2013 MS Humanitarian Award will be presented to Barry Sternlicht, Chairman and CEO of Starwood Capital Group, the private investment firm Sternlicht formed in 1991 with a focus on global real estate, hotel management, energy infrastructure and securities trading. Sternlicht is also Chairman of Starwood Property Trust, now the largest commercial mortgage real estate investment trust in the United States traded on the New York Stock Exchange. For the past 22 years, he has structured over 500 investment transactions with an asset value of $44 billion. Starwood Capital Group employs approximately 280 associates located across 12 offices in six countries including its global headquarters in Greenwich, and other offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Frankfurt, London, Luxembourg, Paris and Sao Paolo.

From 1995 through early 2005, Sternlicht was Chairman and CEO of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., a company he founded in 1995. Sternlicht created W Hotels, perhaps the world’s most successful “boutique” brand, and built St. Regis Hotels into a brand. Sternlicht has been credited as being a dynamic and innovative hotel leader, creating new products and programs with immediate global appeal.

The 2013 MS Hope Award will be presented to Randy Falco, President and CEO of Univision Communications, Inc., the leading media company serving Hispanic America.

Under Falco’s leadership, Univision Communications, Inc., has undergone a company-wide expansion, making great strides it its transformation to a leading multiplatform media company and building a deep portfolio of broadcast, cable, digital and radio platforms. In the last several years, Univision Network has become a fierce contender in the mainstream media marketplace, and routinely attracts more viewers than the English-language broadcast networks. Under Falco’s leadership, Univision launched UVideos, the first bilingual digital network, and forged a partnership with ABC to launch “Fusion,” a 24-hour, English-language cable news network for Hispanic audiences, among many other accomplishments.

Falco started his career at NBC where he spent more than 30 years. As President of the NBC Universal Television Network Group, Falco served as COO of NBC Olympics, receiving Emmy Awards for the broadcasting of the 2002 Winter Olympics, the 2000 Summer Olympics, the 1996 Summer Olympics and the 1992 Summer Olympics. Just prior to joining Univision in 2011, Falco served as Chairman and CEO of AOL, Inc.

Fellow 11-time Emmy Award winner Armen Keteyian, News Correspondent with CBS News, will serve as this year’s MS Dinner of Champions master of ceremonies.

Based in New York City, Keteyian is also the Lead Correspondent for 60 Minutes Sports, which airs on Showtime, and a Contributing Correspondent to 60 Minutes.

Keteyian has authored or co-authored 10 books including the recently published, “The System,” an inside look at college football. His previous books include: "Why You Crying?" The New York Times bestselling autobiography of actor/comedian George Lopez; "Money Players: Days and Nights Inside the New NBA,” chronicling the rise of the NBA under David Stern; and The New York Times bestseller, "Raw Recruits.”

Last year, more than 200 people attended the black tie optional event, which raised more than $250,000. Since its inception, MS Dinner of Champions has raised more than $7 million for the fight against multiple sclerosis.

Funds raised through National MS Society events ensure ongoing scientific research to help develop better treatments and a cure for multiple sclerosis. Funds also provide for the continuation of programs and services offered by the Connecticut Chapter.

The MS Dinner of Champions, established in 1978, honors champions of the business and sports industry making a difference in their organizations and communities. Past honorees hail from companies such as Ernst & Young, IBM, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, Mutual of America, Pfizer and Xerox Corporation as well as both local and national sports figures Steve Young, Joe Namath, Frank Gifford, John Starks, Billie Jean King, Mary Lou Retton and Bobby Valentine.

The event includes a pre-event cocktail reception, exciting live and silent auctions and an awards ceremony.

For more information on the 35th Annual MS Dinner of Champions, contact Meg Staubley at 860.913.2550, ext. 52524, or email meganne.staubley@nms.org.
In 2013, 10,000 walkers stepped out at 12 walk sites across the state of Connecticut to collectively make a more than $1.26 million mark against MS.

News 8 evening anchor Darren Kramer served as grand marshall, leading the walk in Manchester.

The Connecticut Chapter would like to thank Travelers for their continued support. Other sponsors included platinum sponsor Enterprise; diamond sponsors Assa Abloy, EMD Serono, Novartis and Saint Francis Care; gold sponsors Castleton Commodities International, LLC, Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, Naugatuck Savings Bank Foundation and USA Hauling & Recycling, Inc.; silver sponsors Advanced Wheels, Biogen Idec, Center for Orthopaedics, P.C., DocuSource Business Solutions, Lydall, Inc., The Okonite Company and Questcor Pharmaceuticals; and bronze sponsors Richard Chevrolet, Inc., and Wireless Zone.

**Walk Site Top Teams**

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Team Name</th>
<th>Funds Raised</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>Cheshire High School</td>
<td>$25,932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danbury</td>
<td>Danbury High School</td>
<td>$5,060</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Hartford (formerly Manchester)</td>
<td>East Hartford JFK Middle School</td>
<td>$4,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>Enfield Hoopster’s Boosters</td>
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<td>Litchfield</td>
<td>Litchfield Marching McGraths</td>
<td>$12,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>New London (formerly Waterford)</td>
<td>New London Camp Harkness</td>
<td>$4,335</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Manchester Joanie’s Ponies</td>
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<td>Simsbury</td>
<td>Simsbury The MS Kateers</td>
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<td>Stamford</td>
<td>Stamford Miracles for Mike</td>
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<td>West Hartford</td>
<td>West Hartford Travelers</td>
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<td>West Haven</td>
<td>West Haven Neighborhood Walkers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westport</td>
<td>Westport Team Burger</td>
<td>$49,630</td>
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**Top 10 Fundraisers – Statewide**

1. Alec Burger                  $49,630
2. Robert Flowers              $38,173
3. Joy Pozefsky                $32,545
4. Chris Getman                $19,445
5. Joan Sidney                 $16,033
6. Stephen Borsy               $14,682
7. Dan Dorsey                  $13,551
8. Don Walsh                   $12,722
9. Abby Bowers                 $10,743
10. Kacey Sullivan             $9,945
More than 800 cyclists shifted gears to pedal up to 100 miles and raised more than $578,000 during the Bike MS: Red Thread + Steelcase Ride, presented by Louis Dreyfus Commodities. The event took place Sunday, June 2, in Windsor and Sunday, June 8, in Westport.

The Connecticut Chapter would like to extend thanks to title sponsor Red Thread + Steelcase and presenting sponsor Louis Dreyfus Commodities. Other sponsors included diamond sponsors Bunge Global Markets and EMD Serono; and gold sponsors Mitchell Auto Group, Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, Saint Francis Care and Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

Top Teams
Westport
Louis Dreyfus Commodities $54,128
Windsor
Maag Wheels $85,560

Top 10 Fundraisers
1. Evan Flaschen $64,560
2. John Formica $34,914
3. Larry Greenhall $25,646
4. Peter Porrino $17,310
5. Richard Jarrett $16,445
6. Cornelius Grealy $13,600
7. Lew Schwartz $13,550
8. Ray Martin $12,573
9. Steven Bowman $9,870
10. Patrick Smith $8,500
This year’s Bike MS: Cardio Express Ride attracted more than 250 participants, spectators and volunteers. Cyclists traveled through nine towns and over three bridges on Sunday, Sept. 8, at Riverside Park in Hartford and raised $110,000. The Connecticut Chapter would like to thank title sponsor Cardio Express Fitness Centers and presenting sponsor Cashman + Katz. Other supporters included Crystal Rock, Massage Envy Spa, PowerBar, Peel Liqueurs, Olde Burnside Brewing Company, The Local Suspects, Community Health Charities, KISS 95.7 and Riverfront Recapture, as well as participating bike shops Bicycles East, EMS of Manchester, Pedal Power, Suburban Ski & Bike, The Bike Shop and Tolland Bike.

**Top Team**
Team Cardio Express

*Final stats were not available at press time.*

Last fall, 879 runners turned out for the Connecticut Chapter’s First Ever Run MS: A Spooktacular 5K at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012. The event raised over $19,000. The Connecticut Chapter would like to thank Run MS sponsor Novartis Pharmaceuticals.

**Top Fundraiser**
Holly Smalley $1,700
Do It Yourself

Contribution by Jack Coraggio, Danbury

Last year Do It Yourself fundraising raised nearly $79,000. This year the chapter-sponsored initiative is expecting to raise $117,000. The types of events are as colorful and imaginative as those planning them.

“Do It Yourself events help to not only raise funds, but awareness too,” said Kate Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. “Individuals planning these events share with their community their personal connection to MS while at the same time offering their friends, family and co-workers an opportunity to unite their passions with a commitment to the cause – the fight against MS.”

It is nice that interested parties don’t have to be limited to one or two events a year, but rather can raise funds on the continuum. Hosting a beer tasting is nice. Organizing a popular poker tournament that last year raised more than $20,000 is nice. Every dollar raised helps to keep the society moving to a “world free of MS.”

Ms. Moore noted that there are two types of DIY events. One, referred to internally as a “third party” event, involves a member(s) of the community hosting a standalone event in which the proceeds are given to the society. The “wraparound” event involves an individual or group organizing a fundraiser to benefit a pre-existing chapter-sponsored event, such as Walk MS, Bike MS or Run MS. The funds raised are then credited to the individual’s or team’s overall fundraising.

According to Karen Butler, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations with the Connecticut Chapter, the number of DIY events has been on the rise over the past five years.

“Community-hosted events have become very popular over the past few years,” said Ms. Butler, who people may know as the captain of the MS Motorcycle Ride fundraising team the Iron Maidens and The Band of Brothers. “The chapter, specifically my department, provides publicity for these events. We help with press releases, social media marketing and more.”

Ms. Butler did it herself and is eager to get the word out. She can also name a few other examples.

“Supporters have hosted many different kinds of events,” she continued. “We have a board member, Karen Guarnaccia, who hosts an annual sangria throw-down. A woman in New London hosts a shopping extravaganza, a wraparound event to boost her walk team’s fundraising. Don and Jenifer Walsh, Cheshire, host an annual beer tasting to help increase Team Jenifer’s overall fundraising. Others have hosted pig roasts, golf tournaments, lacrosse tournaments, scavenger hunts, comedy nights, rose sales on Valentine’s Day, concerts, motorcycle rides, rugby tournaments, poker tournaments, French horn concerts, car shows, art shows, chili cook-offs, piano concerts, pub crawls and more.”

In fact, last year there were more than 100 DIY fundraisers. For a shopping extravaganza, the organizer, Kailah Pflugbeil, secured a large available space and charged vendors $20 for booths. She then hosted drawings and invited food vendors. Shoppers were not charged. Ms. Pflugbeil brought in more than $800 in vendor fees through her event. Earlier this year even I decided to “do it myself” and organized a March Madness college basketball DIY fundraiser. Cubicle-dwellers know well that each March those bracket pools have fans tracking which colleges advanced in their particular pool.

“They’re all great ideas,” said Ms. Moore. “And it’s up to them.” It’s up to you.

Jack Coraggio, Danbury, studied journalism at the University of Connecticut. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2003. His writing has been published in Voices, Hartford Courant, Litchfield County Times, Torrington Register-Citizen, New Haven Register, Middletown Press and Connecticut Magazine. He currently reports for Waterbury Republican-American.

For more information on Do It Yourself fundraising, guidance or to request assistance with marketing your event, contact the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter, at 860.913.2550.

DIY Event Planning
Kate Moore
Marketing & Public Relations
Karen E. Butler
HELEN’S HEROES GOLF CLASSIC – $14,500

Bob Lukaszek hosted the 7th annual Helen’s Heroes Golf Classic on Friday, June 21, at Grassy Hill Country Club, located in Orange. Through increased participation, the new silent auction and sponsorships from Forsa Team Sports, Dynamic Designs Kitchen & Bath LLC and The Harty Press, funds increased from $9,100 in 2012 to $14,500 this year. This brings the total amount of money that the tournament has raised over the years to more than $60,000. Plans are already in place for next year’s Helen’s Heroes Golf Classic, which is set for Friday, June 20, 2014.

NOCHE MEXICANA FOR MS – $672

Manchester resident Lisa Fine, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1991, partnered with Tio Juan’s Margaritas Mexican Restaurant, located in East Hartford, to host a series of four fundraisers to support Fine’s Walk MS team, Lisa Fine Steppers. The events raised a total of $672.

GLASTONBURY LACROSSE TOURNAMENT – $3,000

Kevin McHugh and the Glastonbury Lacrosse Club hosted the 28th Annual Glastonbury Lacrosse Tournament July 20 and 21 at Glastonbury High School. This year’s tournament raised more than $3,000. The tournament began to support the National MS Society after the previous director, Joe Cooper, began donating half of the proceeds of the tournament in memory of his brother, David Cooper, who passed away from complications of multiple sclerosis.

Host your own fundraising event to help in the fight against MS. Do It Yourself (DIY) events are volunteer coordinated events – sometimes referred to as “MS community events” or “third party” – run by volunteers independently from the chapter, and can include golf tournaments, bake sales, tastings (beer, wine, sangria, food); shopping; sports (basketball, rugby, golf, softball, lacrosse); themed pub crawls (such as a Santa pub crawl); pig roasts; spaghetti dinners; chili cook-offs; music festivals; scavenger hunts; comedy nights; poker tournaments; motorcycle rides; home parties (kitchenware, candles, jewelry, etc.); tag sales; backyard cookouts and more. For more information, visit www.ctfightsMS.org.
She Loves To Laugh
Luncheon To Combine Shopping Extravaganza With Yoga’s Larissa Nusser

Multiple sclerosis is no laughing matter. However, Larissa Nusser, who was diagnosed with MS in 2000, has found a way to laugh in its face. Nusser, a graduate of the Integral Yoga Institute of Manhattan, is an exciting interactive motivational speaker who is a certified yoga instructor with Integral Yoga and Yoga Alliance. Nusser, who is also a certified life coach with Coach Training Alliance, will serve as this year’s Greater Hartford Women Against MS Luncheon keynote speaker. Nusser teaches laughter yoga, a revolutionary idea that is sweeping the country and beyond. Laughing yoga combines unconditional laughing with yogic breathing. Essentially, anyone can laugh for no reason and with proper techniques and breathing, unconditional laughing becomes contagious.

The 2013 Women Against MS Luncheon will again feature the popular shopping extravaganza before and after the lunch program. Guests are encouraged to enlist as table captains, drafting co-workers, friends and family to the fight against MS. The Greater Hartford Women Against MS Luncheon will take place Friday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Shopping begins at 10 a.m., with the lunch program starting at noon. Returning for a fourth year, the luncheon will be hosted by Lisa Carberg, Evening News Anchor for NBC Connecticut. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.ctfightsMS.org.
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Every day, the National MS Society receives calls from people who are not appropriately housed because of their multiple sclerosis. Living spaces can be inaccessible, too expensive or not suited to the social needs of a young person living with MS.

As a result, too many people living with multiple sclerosis in the state of Connecticut have been forced to prematurely enter a nursing home. While these facilities offer appropriate staffing and accessibility for people living with MS, some do not have the background or understanding of this complex, life-long illness.

Enter the Regan Development Corporation. In 2011, the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter and Regan Development joined forces with one goal in mind: developing the first supportive, affordable and accessible independent living apartment complex specially designed for individuals living with MS in Connecticut.

After receiving his diagnosis of MS in 1993, Ken Regan, Vice President of New York-based Regan Development, turned to his local chapter of the National MS Society for guidance and support.

“I was so pleased with the support and information the society was able to provide for me at such a difficult time in my life that I knew I needed to give back,” said Regan. “I knew I had a set of skills and expertise that could fulfill a need of the National MS Society, so I asked what I could do to help.”

That is when Regan learned of the many housing issues facing people living with multiple sclerosis. With the help of society staff, Regan formed a task force of people with experience in accessible housing and MS to discuss how the society could do more to meet the residential needs of people with MS. He wrote, “Developing Housing for the MS Community,” a step-by-step handbook that local builders can use as a guide for financing and constructing accessible housing even before taking on his first project, located in Freehold Township, N.J.

“I was so pleased with the support and information the society was able to provide for me at such a difficult time in my life that I knew I needed to give back...”

- Ken Regan
Property Developer
Diagnosed in 1993.

In 2011, the Connecticut Chapter began working with the governor’s office, the Department of Social Services, Senators Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy, local representatives and regional county officials to secure support for the project.

By Jacqueline L. Sembor, Communications Specialist
“I am extremely proud to be involved with the development of Simsbury Specialty Housing,” said Lisa Gerrol, President and CEO of the National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter. “Accomplishing a project that affords people living with MS in our community the ability to live independently has been a primary goal of mine for the past 19 years and it is finally coming to fruition.”

In 2013, the Simsbury Specialty Housing project was awarded state tax credits and Rental Assistance Program vouchers for each unit.

In all, Simsbury Specialty Housing will consist of 48 units. Of those units, 32 one- and two-bedroom units are allotted for individuals living with MS, eight units will be used to transition individuals with MS out of nursing home facilities and an additional eight units will be available for individuals from the town of Simsbury living with a variety of disabilities.

The proposed barrier-free apartments include automated door openers, 42-inch wide doorways, hardwood and ceramic tile floors, custom horizontal sliding windows for easy opening, fully accessible kitchens, accessible bathrooms and much more.

“One of the neat features of Simsbury Specialty Housing that I especially like is the raised gardens outside which will be fully accessible,” shared Regan. “They will be six feet wide, and raised higher than the average raised garden so that residents of all mobility levels will be able to reach into the gardens to tend to their plants. It is just another one of the features that will make the construction more than just an apartment; it will strengthen the social fabric of the complex, making for a real community where people can grow together.”

Simsbury resident Shannon O’Donnell knows all too well how beneficial this new housing option will be. Soon after receiving a diagnosis of MS at the age of 23, O’Donnell began living at a state-subsidized apartment complex for seniors. Over the last ten years, she has made many friends and has grown to enjoy her home, however, it has never been a perfect fit for a woman in her 30s to be living with people more than twice her age.

“I recently learned of the National MS Society housing initiative,” shared O’Donnell. “I am very excited at the possibility of living in a community that includes others my age – others who understand the challenges of living with a disability.”

With a groundbreaking in the fall of 2013 and a 15-month construction period, the anticipated opening date for Simsbury Specialty Housing is the winter of 2014.

“There are so many people in our state, like Shannon, who have had to make the best out of their situation, but soon the state will be able to offer a much better-suited home for some people living with MS,” said Gerrol. “I am looking forward to the day that residents will be able to move in to their new accessible homes.”

The National MS Society will not participate in the screening of individuals who apply for an apartment within Simsbury Specialty Housing.

For more information on Simsbury Specialty Housing, contact Regan Development at 914.693.3011 or email rentals@regandevelopment.com.
SUPPORT GROUPS

Please verify group meetings with leaders prior to attending as dates and times are subject to change and meetings may be moved due to holidays. The contact information provided should not be used for solicitation purposes. Additional support can be found online at www.msconnection.org.

The BRANFORD MS Support Group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the James Blackstone Memorial Library, 758 Main St. in Branford. Call Cheryl at 203.535.3053.

The COLCHESTER MS Support Group meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon on the second Saturday of each month at 59 Harrington Court in Colchester. Call Peggie at 860.267.9759.

The DANBURY Caregivers MS Support Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Main Street Rehab Center, 235 Main St. in Danbury. Call Joe at 203.264.2252.

The DANBURY professionally facilitated support group meets on the second Wednesday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Main Street Rehab Center, 235 Main St. in Danbury. Care partners are welcome to attend a separate meeting. Call Eric Szafran at 800.344.4867.

The DERBY MS Support Group meets from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at Griffin Hospital, 130 Division St. in Derby. Call Lisa at 203.231.4716.

The GRANBY MS Support Group meets at 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month at Salmon Brook Apartments, 287 Salmon Brook St. in Granby. Call Jane at 860.653.2436.

The HAMDEN MS Support Group meets at 11 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month at the Playwright, 1232 Whitney Ave. in Hamden. Call Paul at 203.213.5466.

The HARTFORD MS Support Group meets from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Ready Set Prep, 384-386 Woodland St. in Hartford. Call Lurrann at 860.707.0755.

The MANCHESTER MS Support Group meets at 10 a.m. on the first Monday of each month at the Presbyterian Church of Manchester, 394 Lydall St. in Manchester. Call Nancy at 860.742.5155 or Karen at 860.875.9730.

The MIDDLETOWN MS Support Group meets at 1 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month at Wadsworth Glen, 30 Boston Rd. in Middletown. Call Mary at 860.828.5240.

The MILFORD MS Support Group meets at 1:30 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month at Milford Hospital, 300 Seaside Ave. in Milford. Call Debbie at 203.878.6661 or John at 203.874.1225.

The NEWINGTON MS Support Group meets from 12 - 2 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at the Newington Senior and Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St. in Newington. Call Charlie at 860.667.1314 or Tom at 860.236.2751.

The NEW HAVEN MS Support Group meets from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at the Wexler-Grant School, 55 Foote St. in New Haven. Call Loren at 203.773.0878.

The NEW LONDON MS Support Group meets at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, 365 Montauk Ave. in New London. Call Eileen at 860.442.0711, ext. 4990.

The NORWALK MS Support Group meets from 1 to 3 p.m. on the first Friday of each month at the South Norwalk Library, 10 Washington St. in Norwalk. Call Erica at 203.840.0104.

The PLAINVILLE MS Support Group meets on the third Monday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Wheeler Clinic, 91 Northwest Drive in Plainville. Call June at 860.747.0564.

The SHELTON support group meets on the second Monday of each month from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Plum Library, 65 Wooster St. in Shelton. Call Eric Szafran at 800.344.4867.

The STORRS MS Support Group meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Mansfield Senior Center, 303 Maple Rd. in Storrs/Mansfield. Call Joan at 860.429.7271 or Jennifer at 860.450.0530.

The TORRINGTON professionally facilitated support group meets from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the VNS of Connecticut, 62 Commercial Blvd. in Torrington. Call Eric Szafran at 800.344.4867.

The TRUMBULL MS Support Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Trumbull Library, 33 Quality St. in Trumbull. Call Amy Watkins at 800.344.4867.

The VERNON MS Support Group meets at 7 p.m. on the first Friday of each month in the Community Room at the Vernon Police Department, 725 Hartford Turnpike in Vernon. Call Nancy at 860.742.5155. The WATERBURY MS Support Group meets at 5:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the Joseph Jaynes Building, 77-79 Bishop St., Function Room in Waterbury. Call Karen at 203.754.9656.

A second WATERBURY MS Support Group meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at the Village at East Farms, 180 Scott Rd. in Waterbury. Call Jackie at 203.753.2708.

The WEST HAVEN MS Support Group meets at 11:15 a.m. every Thursday at the West Haven Veterans Administration Hospital, Building 2, on the third floor, located at 950 Campbell Ave. in West Haven. This support group is open to veterans only. Call Mary Lou at 203.932.5711, ext. 2276.

Infoline 24-hour counseling dial 211
MS Friends helpline at 1.866.673.7436

Be sure to visit www.ctghtsMS.org and click on the “Client Programs” button to find out the most up-to-date information on the vital programs and services offered by the Connecticut Chapter.

On The Move
On The Move is a social group for people with MS in their 20s and 30s living with MS. The group meets on the second Wednesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in either Norwalk or Fairfield. Call Amy Watkins at 800.344.4867.

Caregivers’ Meeting
Caregivers and family members are invited to join the National MS Society for an informal meeting to talk about the impact of MS on their lives and to share struggles and solutions with each other. For more information on the next meeting, call Amy Watkins at 800.344.4867.
UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Northeast Region Teleconferences
Living Well with MS, The Other Side of MS Research, Health Policy and Cognition
Wednesday, December 4, 2013
7 - 8 p.m.

Spring Session Teleconferences
April-June 2014. Upcoming topics: Exercise and Nutrition, Cognition and MS, and New Disease Modifying Therapies.

NATIONALLY OFFERED PROGRAMS

Knowledge Is Power is a free, at-home educational series for people newly diagnosed with MS and their families. Knowledge is Power is written by Dr. Rosalind Kalb, a highly regarded author and psychologist, who knows about MS and the effect it can have on your life and the lives of people who care about you. The program provides up-to-date facts about many aspects of MS. Knowledge Is Power provides information about dealing with one of the greatest challenges presented by MS—the unpredictability and uncertainty of the future. Register by calling an MS Navigator today at 1-800-FIGHT MS (1-800-344-4867).

MS Friends: Peer Telephone Support
Call the MS Friends helpline at 1-866-673-7436 between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. every day. All conversations are confidential to the peer relationship.

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Call For Computer Volunteers

The National MS Society’s Computer Outreach Program is in need of volunteers. The program provides computers to people with multiple sclerosis who are restricted to their homes or live in a long-term care facility. The Connecticut Chapter is looking for volunteers who are willing to take on the role of refurbishing donated computers and loading software and assistive/adaptive technology. Volunteers would then help train people on the new technology and media. Volunteers should have knowledge of Windows 7, troubleshooting, social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and adaptive/assistive software such as Dragon Speech, Zoom Text and Skype. Volunteers should also be willing to follow-up with computer recipients on a regular basis.

For more information about this program, please contact Eric Szafran at 800.344.4867 or by email at eric.szafran@nmss.org
The Postpartum Period And Multiple Sclerosis

The first few months after childbirth may be difficult for a woman living with multiple sclerosis. Knowing this, expecting parents are encouraged to develop a plan for navigating the temporary period of time when a new mother’s relapse rate rises.

In 2004 one of the top 10 journals in the neurosciences, Brain, published the Pregnancy in Multiple Sclerosis study (PRIMS). To date, it is the largest study to identify the possible influences of pregnancy and delivery on the clinical course of MS.

The study confirmed that the three-month period following the delivery of a baby is a period of increased risk for MS relapse. In fact, relapse rates jump during those three months by 20 to 40 percent. The good news is that there are a couple of options available to women who are at risk for a relapse during the first few months of their child’s life.

“As with all treatment plans associated with MS, there needs to be a patient and provider discussion, including the potential risks and benefits of various treatment options during pregnancy and the time period after delivery,” shared Amy Neal, a certified Physician Assistant and Clinical Coordinator for the Mandell Center for Comprehensive MS Care.

“An agreement between the patient and clinician is made regarding the time frame in which MS medication will be restarted.”

While disease-modifying medications are not advisable during the breastfeeding period, a 2004 study published in the Journal of Neurology found that intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg) administered during the postpartum period may reduce the risk of MS relapse. And, it did not have an effect on a woman’s ability to breastfeed.

“There are significant benefits to breast-feeding, and a patient may feel strongly about pursuing this and delaying restarting treatment,” said Neal, who in September presented a lecture titled “Assessing Pregnancy in Patients with Multiple Sclerosis” at the Mandell Center. “Educating the patient about the risk of relapse and having a low threshold to restart treatment if relapse were to occur are key.” A more recent 2012 study published in Neurology agreed, concluding that the increased relapse rate after delivery was lower for patients taking an IVIg treatment and that use of the treatment for relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis patients during lactation is an effective option to reduce the incidence of postpartum relapses.

As is the case with anyone taking a medication, women considering pregnancy who are on disease-modifying therapies for the treatment of their MS should discuss their options with a physician before making any changes.

“Most women will experience a remission of their MS symptoms during pregnancy, but there is still the chance that symptoms will flare up despite pregnancy,” cautioned Neal. “In some cases, an expecting mother may need to continue a course of steroids throughout the pregnancy or may need to begin their disease-modifying therapy immediately after delivery. What is most important is for a mother to get the necessary care needed so she can enjoy her new motherhood.”

While intravenous immunoglobulin might be the only treatment with significant research verifying that it can be recommended for women with MS during the period of pregnancy, further multi-center investigations are needed.

Aside from mapping out a medication regimen, expecting mothers should also plan on having some help close by in the months following the birth of a child. While adjusting to the sleeping habits of a newborn, underlying fatigue or an MS relapse, new moms may require may benefit from having assistance available from family members, friends, a paid house worker or a nurse.

“Women who have MS and wish to start a family are not so different from women who do not have MS,” said Neal. “Women can usually carry a baby safely and successfully with the guidance and support of their neurologist and obstetrician.”

For more information on pregnancy and MS, visit www.nationalMSsociety.org
Call For Applications:
College Scholarship Program

The Connecticut Chapter is accepting submissions for the 2014 National MS Society College Scholarships Program funded by the Hayley’s Hope and Michaela’s Miracle MS Memorial Fund and the National MS Society.

Scholarships are awarded to high school seniors who either have multiple sclerosis or have a parent who is living with MS. Candidates must demonstrate courage, perseverance and academic prowess in the face of the many day-to-day challenges associated with multiple sclerosis.

Applications are currently being accepted online.

The deadline to submit applications is Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014. To apply, please visit www.ctfightsMS.org.

Activist Training
The National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter will host MS Activist Training
Saturday, Nov. 23, at 10:30 a.m.
Wethersfield Public Library
515 Silas Deane Hwy, Wethersfield, CT 06109
For more information or to register, contact Eric Szafran at 800.344.4867 or by email at eric.szafran@nmss.org.

Congratulations to our 2013 Connecticut Executive Choice Awards Honorees

Maureen Magnan
Chief of Staff, House Democrats, State of Connecticut

Thomas S. Santa
President & CEO, Santa Energy Corporation

Richard Simione
Simione, Maccio & Larrow, LLP

The Connecticut Executive Choice Award recognizes and honors exceptional professionals in Connecticut who have made contributions to the business, civic or cultural betterment of our community.

The 2013 awards were presented on Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2013, at the Aqua Turf Club.

Call for Applications:
College Scholarship Program

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Published by Physician’s Disability Services, Inc., 2012
136 pages – 2 copies

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2013
35th Annual MS Dinner of Champions
Hilton Stamford Hotel, Stamford

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2013
Greater Hartford Women Against MS Luncheon
Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2013
Greater New Haven MS Taste of Hope
The Shubert Theater, New Haven

SATURDAY, APRIL 5 & SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2014
Walk MS
12 locations across Connecticut
For programs, refer to page 23. For more information on these and other events, visit ctfightsMS.org.

IF YOU WANT TO PUT A SIGNS UP
If you would like to reserve a 2014 Walk MS lawn sign, contact Karen E. Butler at 860.913.2550 or by email at karen.butler@nmss.org.

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The National MS Society, Connecticut Chapter, has been influencing Connecticut legislation and public policy for more than 20 years. Over the years, chapter priorities have included access to affordable and comprehensive medical care, community based long-term care services for those with chronic illnesses, accessible women’s healthcare, accessible and affordable housing and transportation services and year-round energy assistance. Our ongoing and dedicated activism led to the launch of the state funded Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled. You don’t have to be loud to be heard. JOIN THE MOVEMENT to raise awareness and help people with disabilities stay connected to the great big moving world. For more information, visit www.ctfightsMS.org.