



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**  
National Capital  
Chapter

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CONTACT: Vanessa Hernandez or Diane Metzger  
(202) 296-5363, option 2  
PR@MSandYOU.org

### **Local Volunteer Activists Meet with Legislators**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Local MS activists met with legislators at the Virginia General Assembly for Virginia Advocacy Day in Richmond on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The activists met with 21 different senators and representatives to discuss important measures that will benefit people living with MS in Virginia. The activists consisted of three staff members from the National MS Society, National Capital Chapter and 11 local advocacy volunteers with a connection to MS who shared their own personal experiences with the Chapter’s Virginia platform issues.

“I have volunteered at the National Capital Chapter’s Bike MS and Capital Challenge Walk MS and participated in Walk MS for seven years,” said Elizabeth Bradley, Arlington resident and MS activist. “This was my first time attending Virginia Advocacy Day; I’ve never done it before. After communicating through countless e-mails, letters, and phone calls, this seemed like the next logical step in trying to get our platform across.”

“Thanks to the dedicated work of our MS activists, we got the chance to talk with our Virginia state legislators about MS issues and the critical issues faced by people living with this disease,” said Chris Broullire, National Capital Chapter President. “We give voice to people living with MS by raising awareness and calling for change in a positive way.”

The meetings centered on sensible budget cuts and protecting services that people with MS currently have. The Society’s priority objectives in Virginia include **expanding access to disease modifying therapies by decreasing the cost of prescription drugs**. The National Multiple Sclerosis Medical Advisory Board has stated that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy may reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with MS. Many are forced to stop their prescribed therapy (which can cost an individual more than \$30,000 each year) because they cannot afford it. Further MS issues include **improving access to affordable and accessible housing** as well as **protecting and enhancing services for the most vulnerable communities**, such as low-income families, which are more susceptible to budget cuts.

The National Capital Chapter of the National MS Society primarily addresses state and local advocacy issues, but also supports the federal advocacy priorities. The Chapter advocates for policies and programs that will benefit people with MS and their families in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and

Virginia. Individuals can visit [www.MSandYou.org](http://www.MSandYou.org) to join the MS Action Network in order to receive e-newsletters and MS Action Alerts when important issues need immediate action.

### **About Multiple Sclerosis**

Multiple sclerosis interrupts the flow of information from the brain to the body and stops people from moving. Every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with MS, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with more than twice as many women as men being diagnosed with the disease. MS affects more than 400,000 people in the U.S., and 2.5 million worldwide.

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis. Talk to your health care professional and contact the National MS Society at [www.MSandYOU.org](http://www.MSandYOU.org) or (202) 296-5363 to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.

### **About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society**

MS stops people from moving. The National MS Society exists to make sure it doesn't. Locally, the National Capital Chapter provides a wide range of vital services in the areas of counseling, education, employment, information and referral, public policy development and advocacy, and financial assistance to the many thousands of people with MS and their families who live in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. For more information about MS or the National Capital Chapter, please call (202) 296-5363 or visit [www.MSandYOU.org](http://www.MSandYOU.org).

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