



For Immediate Release

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IL Lottery Introduces the MS Project New Instant Game Funds Multiple Sclerosis Research

Lottery has raised \$5.7 million for MS research since 2008

Chicago – March 18, 2013. As part of its mission to financially support important causes, the Illinois Lottery has introduced a new instant game from which all proceeds are dedicated to research the causes, prevention, and cure of multiple sclerosis (MS), an often debilitating disease. *MS Project*, the sixth edition of a specialty instant game that funds MS research, will generate over \$1 million this year to support research programs. Since 2008, the Lottery, working closely with the National MS Society, has raised more than \$5.7 million from the sale of MS instant games.

In announcing the new *MS Project* game, Illinois Lottery Superintendent Michael Jones was joined today by John Blazek, President of the National MS Society Greater Illinois Chapter; Dr. Douglas Feinstein, UIC researcher and MS grant recipient; and Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

“Lotteries have a long history of raising money for important, common-good causes,” said Illinois Lottery Superintendent Michael Jones. “If you decide to buy a MS Project instant ticket, win or lose, your action creates substantial funding for programs that combat MS. MS is especially devastating among young women, it strikes with little warning and is among the most pernicious of diseases. Join us in the MS Project to use a lottery to create important funding.”

The *MS Project* instant game will provide over \$ 1million for the Illinois Multiple Sclerosis Research Fund. Proceeds will be used to help physicians better understand the disease, and to enable researchers to continue their diligent efforts to discover a cure. Each *MS Project* ticket costs \$2 and includes potential top instant prizes of up to \$20,000. It is available at all lottery retailers in Illinois.

Mary Donovan of Oak Forest won a top prize on last year’s MS instant game, named Mission Move. “I’m not a regular Lottery player, but I had to buy this ticket. My daughter was diagnosed with MS two years ago. Thankfully, she is doing well, and is still working,” said Donovan. “When the Lottery offers a game like this, people should know the money is going to such an important cause; I think everyone should play. We need to do all we can to fight MS. I am grateful the Illinois Lottery is raising funds to help us find a cure for MS.”

“With so many breakthroughs in MS research happening worldwide, this is a time of great promise for people living with MS,” said John Blazek, President of the MS Society’s Greater Illinois Chapter. “We are very excited that this unique pilot research initiative, fueled by Lottery funds, will propel new research on multiple sclerosis in Illinois and continue to move us closer to a cure.”



Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and the body. 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.

“We’re very happy to have received grant money, and want to thank the Illinois Lottery for making funds available for basic and clinical research,” said Dr. Douglas Feinstein, National MS Society grant recipient and UIC researcher. “One of the goals of our project is to look for interventions that would provide support or increase survival of the neurons and axons in individuals with MS.”

The Illinois Department of Public Health will continue to provide *MS Project* proceeds to the National MS Society, which, in turn, awards grants to organizations conducting MS research in Illinois. All grants funded by MS Project revenue have been, and will continue to be, reviewed and approved by the National MS Society’s Research Programs Advisory Committee, a panel that includes 75 leading scientists, physicians and other professionals from virtually every field related to MS.

“There are at least 400,000 Americans living with MS, and every week about 200 people are diagnosed with the disease. About 20,000 are living with MS in Illinois,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “The treatment cost for people with MS can average \$70,000 a year, so IDPH is proud to have the ability to provide funding to researchers who are working diligently to make the lives of those currently living with the disease more comfortable and, ultimately, working to find a cure.”

MS Project is available at more than 8,100 Illinois Lottery retailer locations across the state. If you don’t see the game displayed please ask for it. For more information regarding *MS Project*, please visit www.msticket.com or for more information regarding multiple sclerosis, visit www.MSIllinois.org or www.gatewayMSsociety.org.

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About Illinois Lottery: Founded in 1974, the Illinois Lottery has contributed over \$17.5 billion to the state Common School Fund to assist K-12 public schools, as well as the Capital Projects Fund. Players must be at least 18 years old.

About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society: MS stops people from moving. The National MS Society, Greater Illinois and Gateway Area chapters exist to make sure it doesn’t. They address the challenges of each person affected by MS by funding cutting-edge research, driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with MS organizations around the world, and providing programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.

About the Illinois Department of Public Health: Founded in 1877, the Illinois Department of Public Health is responsible for protecting the state’s 12.4 million residents, as well as countless visitors, through the prevention and control of disease and injury. The Department’s nearly 200 programs touch virtually every age, aspect and cycle of life.