

JOIN THE MOVEMENT, Volunteer

Special Committees

Government Relations Committee (GRC)

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society Upstate New York Chapter is recruiting members for Government Relations Committees (GRC) in the following areas: Albany/ Hudson Valley, Greater Rochester, and Buffalo (Western NY). On a state level, GRCs gather information about current activity in priority policy areas through the Society's "State Legislative Trends," local coalitions having mutual interests, involvement in health or disability commissions, subscriptions to publications that report on policy issues, legislative or executive branch contacts, or their own legislative research. The GRC uses this information to choose and prioritize the most important issue(s) for the year and to plan the best advocacy approach. For this reason, we are seeking to recruit a diverse group of people with an array of skills and interests, including individuals with MS and those affected by MS such as concerned family members, disability rights attorneys, health care providers, and staff at local social/medical model adult day care centers, or rehabilitation facilities. We also encourage participation from individuals with strengths in writing and public relations as well as from former legislators or former legislative staff members.

Duties:

Information Gathering:

The GRC is responsible for continuously gathering information—externally about current pending issues and internally about matters or problems that are important to people with MS and their families. The GRC should:

- Have a general understanding of the five major public policy areas of importance to people with MS: federal funding of MS-related research, availability of affordable health insurance, health care quality and patient protections, availability of community-based long-term care options, and the rights of people with disabilities.
- Research expected or pending issue activity in the legislative or executive branches concerning our five major public policy areas.
- Select the health and/or disability coalition(s) for the chapter to join and evaluate the issue information provided by the coalition(s).
- Review the need and opportunities for chapter representation on public commissions dealing with health or disability issues at the state or local levels, and make appropriate recommendations.

Setting Priorities:

- Develop an annual advocacy plan that includes: 1) a priority list of issues that the GRC would like the chapter to support or oppose; 2) position on each issue; 3) realistic advocacy goals for each issue; and 4) strategy and selection of tactics for each issue at various stages of the legislative or administrative process.
- Track the progress of the issue and adjust tactics as needed.
- Track the outcomes and report to chapter board and home office.

Knowledge of Process and Politics:

Usually the GRC recruits one or more members with knowledge and experience in legislative or administrative process. To supplement this knowledge and to enhance the chances for advocacy success, the GRC should:

- Help develop the chapter's legislative and administrative contacts at the federal, state and local levels. Contacts should be important decision-makers in policy areas of importance to people with MS.

Date: **Varies**

Volunteers Needed: **Ongoing recruitment**

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