



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**  
Upstate New York  
Chapter

## It Takes You!

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society Upstate New York Chapter needs you!

The Upstate New York Chapter serves 12,000 families affected by MS throughout 50 counties. The Chapter's mission, as part of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), is to end the devastating effects of MS. Advocacy, in the federal, state, and local sectors, is an essential mission element. Effective advocacy involves committed staff and volunteers who are dedicated to the interests of people with MS. For this reason, the Upstate New York Chapter urges you to get involved!

### Policy Areas

The NMSS has identified four important policy areas for people with MS, including advocating for federal funding to support MS-related research, providing access to affordable health insurance, providing quality, affordable alternatives to keep people with MS living in their communities (long-term care), and to assure physical accessibility for persons with disabilities, protecting their well-being, and preventing discrimination (disability rights).

### How Can I Help...

#### **...on a Federal level...Join the MS Action Network!**

The MS Action Network is the center for Advocacy at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The MS Action Network represents the interests of people with MS as important policy decisions are made in both the public and private sectors. By joining the MS Action Network, you will receive legislative alerts and federal and state updates via email. You will be invited to advocate for individuals affected by MS as simply as sending lawmakers a pre-written email, or as involved as providing testimonies of your experiences with MS at public hearings. You will have the opportunity to influence voting decisions for key federal bills by flooding congressional offices with emails, faxes and telephone calls!

**To learn more about the MS Action Network, please check out  
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/advocacy.asp> today!**

**...on a State and Local level...Join a Government Relations Committee!**

Government Relations Committees (GRC) assume the primary responsibility for advocacy activity on state and local levels.

On a state level, GRCs gather information about current activity in priority policy areas through: the advocacy department's "State Legislative Trends," 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.

On a local level, the GRC directs advocacy efforts towards issues involving both the public and private sectors. Such issues tend to focus on accessibility matters, health-care coverage and long-term care.

**We Need You...**

**If you are interested in joining a Government Relations Committee in your area, please contact:**

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