

**National MS Society**  
**Strategic Response to Multiple Sclerosis**  
**2011-2015**



# Executive Summary

## Strategic Response to Multiple Sclerosis 2011-2015



# Executive Summary

**Vision:** A World Free of MS

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

## **2011-2015 Goals:**

- **We are a driving force of MS research and treatment** to stop disease progression, restore function, and end MS forever
- **We develop, deliver and leverage resources** to enhance care for people with MS and quality of life for those affected by the disease
- **We are leaders in the worldwide MS movement**, mobilizing millions of people to do something about MS now
- **We are activists**
- **We develop and align human, business and financial resources** to achieve breakthrough results

## **Life with MS in 2015:**

When we achieve these aspirational goals, the world for people affected by MS in the year 2015 will have improved significantly:

- New therapies to stop disease activity in relapsing and progressive forms of MS will be developed and tested in clinical trials.
- Those most severely impacted by the disease will have reduced personal and financial hardship. Quality of life will be significantly enhanced through new rehabilitation and symptom management strategies, greater availability of MS healthcare specialists, and increased opportunities to connect with others affected by MS and the community at large.
- People with MS will have increased access to quality, affordable, timely care and symptom management. They will have greater access to health insurance regardless of pre-existing conditions.
- Improved resources will exist in every state for home and community-based services, including long-term support and services. Each state will also invest in workforce funding and training to provide high quality home-based care.
- The public will better understand multiple sclerosis and how it affects individuals and families.
- The Society will be recognized as an organization of choice for people with MS and those who want to join the MS movement. We will demonstrate an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and integrity, united in our unwavering commitment to a world free of multiple sclerosis.

## **Background**

The National MS Society has declared, “We are people who want to do something about MS NOW.” This simple yet bold statement became the foundation for our 2007-2010 Strategic Response to MS which sought to answer this question: ‘How must we respond to the brutal facts of life with multiple sclerosis?’

We determined that these principles best described what our response should be:

- We are a driving force of MS research, relentlessly pursuing prevention, treatment and cure
- We address the challenges of each person whose life is affected by MS
- We mobilize the talents and resources of the millions of people who want to do something about MS
- We are activists
- We will raise \$1.25 billion by 2010

Our quest to fulfill these principles launched a bold, relevant, inclusive, transparent and engaging effort that turned this organization into a movement.

## **Our 2011-2015 Strategic Response**

Over the past 18 months, we sought to envision what the world should look like for people affected by MS in the year 2015. Through an extensive outreach to a wide range of external and internal audiences, we heard from nearly 10,000 individuals about their hopes, dreams, concerns, challenges and experiences – what they want from the MS movement. These individuals represented a range of audiences starting with people with all forms of MS; health care professionals and providers; researchers and scientists; elected officials and activists; donors and event participants; pharmaceutical and other industry partners; corporate partners; Society leaders; and many others.

Their information, stories and advice were critical in the formulation of this plan, focusing our efforts to drive necessary change over the next five years. While we heard many ideas and messages that are reflected in the development of this strategic response, three themes emerged as top priorities:

- ***More research*** – more Society resources should be dedicated to scientific research aimed at stopping disease progression, restoring function and ending MS forever.
- ***More support – in research, services and advocacy – for those with progressive and/or severe MS.*** Those more severely affected are most likely to feel disconnected, underserved, isolated and forgotten.
- ***Attract and retain more scientists, physicians and health care professionals to the MS field.*** A myriad of factors are putting a generation of scientists and physicians at risk. We must reverse this trend, attracting and retaining more talent to research and specialized care for people with MS.

These themes will guide our strategies, priorities and resource allocation over the next five years.

Our respondents also sent clear messages about several other issues to be reflected in our 2011-2015 strategic response. Accordingly, we have included these concepts.

- **Enhance advocacy for health care and insurance change** – mobilize people directly affected by MS to advocate for those changes.
- **Focus on quality of life** –continue to be a leader in providing programs, services and research throughout the continuum of disease progression with stronger emphasis on supporting those who care for people with MS.
- **Address the needs of people affected by MS in rural areas** and other underserved populations – assure that younger and newly diagnosed populations feel included.
- **Increase relevant opportunities for people affected by MS to connect** – through recreational and educational programs or online via social media.
- **Enhance awareness** – stimulate greater understanding in the general public of the disease and its impact on people’s lives. Our constituents want to be involved in raising that awareness.
- **Be an organization of choice** - for all who want to do something about MS now. Attract and retain leaders who embody our core values and embrace learning and innovation to accelerate growth.

**Above all, we must be even more externally focused** – building strong, collaborative relationships with individuals, other MS organizations, the pharmaceutical industry and other corporate partners, academic institutions, government and community organizations.

In the pages that follow you will find the Society’s road map for the next five years. We set forth a bold set of goals and objectives, along with a series of rationales and implications that provide context for our ambitious plan. Our outcomes are specific and measureable in some instances, qualitative in other instances, and always aspirational. We will develop a set of metrics, with appropriate benchmarks and milestones, in order to establish accountability and assure accomplishment of our 2015 goals.

We have set our sights high, mobilizing a highly passionate group of individuals who want to do something about MS NOW! We invite you to rededicate yourself to the movement today and make the world a better place for people affected by MS.

# **Goal Statements**

## **Strategic Response to Multiple Sclerosis**

### **2011-2015**



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**

## Goal Statements

**Goal #1: *We are a driving force of MS research and treatment to stop disease progression, restore function, and end MS forever***

### Objectives:

1. We better understand the scientific mechanisms that lead to disease progression and we accelerate the development of new therapies.
2. We pursue new avenues to discover how nerve cells are damaged and potentially repaired.
3. We pursue new rehabilitation techniques and symptomatic treatments to restore neurological function and enhance quality of life.
4. We identify risk and triggering factors that cause MS, and understand the biological interactions that lead to its development so that MS can be prevented.
5. We expand and strengthen the quantity and quality of MS research worldwide to accelerate new discoveries and treatments for people with MS.

### Rationale:

The Society's global commitment to research continues to advance the field of MS around neuronal damage, genetic susceptibility, and the immunological component. Our collective research investments have played a crucial role in the development of the currently available immunomodulatory therapies for MS, establishment of MS diagnostic criteria, and creation of new clinical trial designs. Yet achieving a world free of MS will require a significantly increased investment in research to further our understanding of MS, particularly progressive MS, and to accelerate better treatments as well as to find an ultimate cure. Expanding the Society's investment in research, including the current funding portfolio as well as a series of new strategic initiatives, reflects our commitment to everyone affected by MS about the expected leadership role we take within the MS research community.

A comprehensive and holistic approach to MS research is the basis for identifying areas of unmet need. Each of these areas is crucial in meeting our research goal and addressing the needs of people with MS, both today and tomorrow.

- Leverage existing programs and resources to generate new knowledge and create strategies for developing new treatments and ultimate prevention for future generations.
- Engage MS researchers around the world in coordinated and collaborative efforts to accelerate knowledge, treatments, and strategies to end the disease forever.
- Create the necessary infrastructure for the growth of a results-oriented, integrated MS research program.
- Retain and further engage the current pool of MS researchers and recruit the next generation of research leaders.

### **Implications:**

- We will engage the scientific and medical community as leaders of the movement to champion the Society's research efforts. This may require additional resources and training so that these volunteers can help drive the Society's research agenda both locally and nationally.
- We will create innovative funding partnerships and collaborative strategies to accelerate progress and commit research funding across a spectrum of priority areas, including existing research programs and clinical trials. This may require difficult decisions to discontinue or redirect existing programs toward new priorities.
- We will place added emphasis on progression in MS, studies of new leads, and increasing the number of fellows and trainees. This may mean that Society resources are shifted from one research area to another and require the assessment and re-balancing of existing programs. These actions may result in concerns from some sectors of the scientific community. They may also be applauded by others.
- We will make decisions based on research priorities, resulting in less focus and funding in certain areas of research and more funding in others.
- We will increase collaboration with other groups and organizations that share our commitment to a world free of MS and continue crucial partnerships with pharmaceutical, biotechnology and other commercial companies. These activities will require adaptations of our funding strategies and decision processes. It will also demand increased transparency and reputation management in order to maintain our role as a trusted and credible source of information.
- We will increase the percentage of Society income that goes to research each year. This will impact the National Program Expense by as much as 2% annually for the life of this plan, bringing our total support of research from 19% in 2011 to at least 25% in 2015.
- We will collaborate and pool resources with other disease and patient advocacy organizations across the globe to create shared tools and resources that will benefit researchers engaged in multiple chronic illnesses.

### **Outcomes:**

- New therapies to stop disease activity in relapsing and progressive forms of MS will be in clinical trials.
- There will be new tools and strategies to measure nerve damage and assess restoration of function after nerve repair in relapsing and progressive forms of MS.
- There will be new strategies to enhance quality of life through rehabilitation and symptom management that are integrated into standard MS care.
- New laboratory tests to measure the risk factors for disease progression are validated through clinical trials.
- New avenues to identify the triggering factors that cause MS will be pursued as a means to prevent the disease.
- Global research progress will be accelerated through significantly increased financial commitments, available funding for all meritorious research projects, rapid deployment of funds to test new ideas or potential therapies, and recruitment and retention of more scientists and physicians committed to MS research and clinical care.

***Goal #2: We develop, deliver and leverage resources to enhance care for people with MS and quality of life for all those affected by the disease***

**Objectives:**

1. We expand access to high quality MS care.
2. We provide timely, accurate, comprehensive information for all constituents.
3. We focus our efforts on minimizing the financial impact of MS on individuals and families.
4. We connect people affected by MS, especially those with severe disability, with their communities, information resources, programs and services, and each other.

**Rationale:**

The Society is committed to being a central resource for people affected by MS, whether they are seeking information, local services, treatment, or connections to community resources and others living with the disease. Information and opinions about MS abound, and the sheer volume of communication can be overwhelming. Treatment options, including those for early and ongoing disease modification as well as symptom management, are increasing, yet access to health care professionals specializing in MS is not. There are not enough health care professionals specializing in MS or beginning careers to care for people with MS. The Society must expand investments in the resources necessary to enhance the care and quality of life for everyone affected by MS.

Keeping people with MS at the center of everything we do requires progress in several areas, ensuring that individuals and families have the information and resources they need to move their lives forward.

- Increase the number of health care professionals in MS specialty care, resulting in increased access to knowledgeable, supportive experts.
- Increase trust in and access to timely, accurate, consistent and comprehensive information to equip individuals and families to make fully informed decisions.
- Leverage the Information Resource Center and MS Navigator programs to improve access to information and community resources, including those that specifically address the significant financial strain caused by MS.
- Increase connection and communication to provide additional education, financial and personal network resources to address the challenges of living with MS – especially for those living with progressed MS and disability, or in a rural location.

**Implications:**

- We will identify, analyze and fill gaps in community resources through partnerships, program development, and services and referrals expansion across organizational boundaries. We will be prepared to develop and deliver vital services when no other options exist for people affected by MS, no matter where they live. This will require vigilant assessment and investment in local community resources and strong collaboration throughout the organization.
- We will build and execute a nationwide plan to attract professionals into the MS field, including neurologists, primary care physicians, mental health professionals, nurses, rehabilitation

therapists, and other medical specialists. This could include financial support for neurologists and clinician-researchers.

- We will dedicate resources to increase access in rural areas and services to people with more progressive forms of MS.
- We will collaborate with the American Academy of Neurology and other disease organizations that depend on neurologists to advocate forcefully for more rational reimbursement programs for neurologists.
- We will be a leader in advocating for health insurance reform to ensure optimal coverage for care and treatment, quality of life and financial security of people with MS, as well as to address concerns about insufficient professional reimbursement for services. Our role as activist is likely to cause controversy and could lead to decisions by some to withdraw their support.
- We will ensure that there is consistent information about emerging therapies, enabling informed decision making for people affected by MS.
- We will leverage online social communication channels to ensure a significant and relevant presence and participation in the larger MS community. We will support self-advocacy in order to ensure that people affected by MS are knowledgeable and prepared to plan for, advocate for, and manage their lives.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Fewer gaps in care will exist, the number of referral resources will increase, and people with MS will receive timely, high quality care regardless of where they live. Comprehensive and coordinated care center partnerships, as well as other MS care facility partnerships, will be formally recognized.
- Information will be provided to people with MS to facilitate enrollment in their preferred health insurance plan, and those in rural areas or with severe disability will have access to telemedicine and other innovative programs for clinical care.
- Insufficient reimbursement will be addressed, resulting in more professionals entering the MS field.
- People with MS, their families, healthcare professionals, and others providing care and support will rely on the Society for accurate, timely and comprehensive information and resources as they make decisions about living with the disease or caring for people with MS.
- Comprehensive financial assistance services and advocacy training and tools will be provided to minimize financial devastation and maximize quality of life.
- Prevalent opportunities exist nationally and locally for peer support, and volunteer leaders receive high quality training and consistent, stable support no matter where they live.
- Life challenges, such as housing and adult day care, are addressed based on need and opportunities for community and corporate partnerships.

### ***Goal #3: We are leaders in the worldwide MS movement, mobilizing millions of people to do something about MS now***

#### **Objectives:**

1. We increase the number and impact of Society volunteers, engaging and cultivating people at all levels and in support of every critical function of the organization.
2. We heighten awareness of MS to facilitate understanding, engagement and action to fuel the movement.
3. We expand the impact of the MS movement through new and enhanced community collaborations and partnerships.
4. We engage volunteers to increase research funding, support those most severely affected by MS, and bring new clinicians and scientists to the movement.

#### **Rationale:**

The Society's vision of a world free of MS is one that we cannot achieve alone, or with only our current resources. We will achieve our vision when each volunteer and staff member takes responsibility for bringing new ideas, diverse talents, and new workers to the movement. The movement will grow by increasing awareness of MS and ensuring that people understand what MS is and the effect MS has on people living with MS, their family and friends.

Changes need to take place within our culture and our infrastructure.

- Operating procedures allow us to be nimble, collaborative and opportunistic.
- Mobilizing others results from proactive planning and engagement.
- Work is conducted differently and is focused on skilled volunteers and organizational collaboration and efficiencies.
- Volunteers are expected to lead.

#### **Implications:**

- Volunteers will lead and take ownership of the movement. This will change the way we work, and some staff members may not be able to adjust.
- Our community presence will increase and require new partners to lead the MS movement. This will require new skills for achieving success.
- We will develop new competencies. This will require appropriate investment in our human, financial and technology infrastructure and systems. It may also mean a redirection of resources from other projects.
- We will continue to bring new talent to the movement, including people living with MS, clinicians, scientists, professionals and tradesmen who have specific skills to offer, and we will ensure they have a rewarding experience. These activities will require greater volunteer recruitment and engagement skills.
- We will engage the MS community in spreading awareness through their stories and experiences, leveraging existing and emerging communications channels more fully. This will require new skills and competencies and increased transparency in our communications.

**Outcomes:**

When we mobilize millions of people in the MS movement, the quality of life will improve for those who live with the disease.

- Increased awareness will better connect people living with MS – and those who love and care about them – with the broader community where support and resources reside. People with MS will be able to talk about their lives first instead of the disease, and those raising vital funds will grow in number because the awareness barrier has been significantly reduced.
- An accelerated pace of research will be supported by increasing numbers of volunteer leaders and fundraisers, resulting in increased treatment options for people with MS.
- Increased levels of service will be available to people affected by MS, specifically to those with progressive forms of the disease, due to increased local and national volunteers, partners, and new programs offering services and assistance to individuals living with MS and their families. This will decrease the isolation felt by people with MS in rural areas and with progressive MS.
- Increased access to quality care will be available to more people affected by MS, who will be better able to make informed treatment decisions. Access to MS experts will be available in geographical areas where there were no experts previously, and people with MS will no longer be restricted to care without specialized MS knowledge and experience.

## **Goal #4: We are activists**

### **Objectives:**

1. We relentlessly advocate for federal, state and local government policies essential to people affected by MS, and we champion the rights of people with disabilities.
2. We engage people in the MS movement to take on leadership roles in advocacy at the federal, state and local levels.
3. We join forces with organizations and coalitions to leverage our influence and advance mutual goals.
4. We use thoughtful communications to help all audiences spread the message that advocacy helps drive research, enhances care and quality of life, and mobilizes millions to do something about MS now.

### **Rationale:**

The complex set of issues facing people affected by MS demands a broad range of approaches, including advocacy in garnering needed services and support for the immediate and longer-term needs of people living with chronic disease. Advocacy is an effective and dynamic means to engage and empower thousands of individuals to create the change that people with MS and their families need. The Society's investment in advocacy, including the expansion of a targeted and coordinated approach, reflects our commitment to achieve policy changes that address underlying, systemic problems faced by people affected by MS.

The successful achievement of such broad policy changes requires the development of a framework that will increase impact and improve outcomes.

- Utilize integrated systems to determine policy priorities and apply necessary resources.
- Increase the engagement of activists throughout the country at all levels, including more people with MS as leaders and spokespeople.
- Build greater influence and effectiveness with elected officials.
- Connect with key partners and coalitions to better leverage resources.
- Develop effective communications strategies that deliver critical messages to policy decision makers and relevant external audiences.

### **Implications:**

- We will focus our resources on policy priorities, and as a result we will lessen or eliminate support in other areas. This may alienate some activists if organizational priorities are not aligned with their personal priorities.
- We will continue to engage people living with MS as leaders and spokespeople with ownership in the movement.
- We will create greater access and opportunity for people to communicate effectively about policy issues that impact their lives, and we will share ways to leverage advocacy for change. These activities will require integrated planning and additional funding, as well as creative partnerships and the necessary expertise to deploy and maintain these supportive systems.

- We will advocate for the needs of people affected by MS and, as a result, may engage in controversial policy issues. This will require the Society to affirm its level of commitment to the priority issues and develop tolerance to criticism from within the MS community and beyond.
- We will engage Society representatives in external citizen committees, boards and task forces at the local, state and federal levels. This will increase the Society's visibility and influence, and increase opportunities to engage more influential volunteers to lead and partner with us to secure needed change.
- We will increase staffing expertise in the advocacy function. This will require additional investment in staff leaders and may result in re-balancing other funding priorities.

**Outcomes:**

- Funding for MS research will increase to at least \$15 million per year through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program under the Department of Defense. We will also see an increase in MS funding at the National Institutes of Health.
- Access to health insurance will increase as a result of successful implementation of national health care reform. Everyone living with MS will access affordable and quality health care without experiencing disparities due to having a chronic disease.
- The Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act will be successfully implemented, full funding for lifespan respite services will sufficiently exist in each state, and fulfillment of the Americans with Disabilities Act will occur. These activities will provide improved resources for community-based, long-term support and services; increased access to housing and transportation; and enhanced services and support for those providing care to people with MS.
- Effective and powerful partnerships will exist with other organizations and coalitions that have shared policy priorities. Activists at all levels and locales will be leaders and partners in the MS movement. This will ensure that the voices of people with MS are heard.
- Elected officials at all levels of government will be increasingly engaged in the MS movement, and connections between volunteer leaders and elected officials will be identified, magnifying influence and change for people affected by MS.
- Consistent and powerful advocacy messaging will be utilized across staff and volunteer leaders to enhance communications and impact, changing the lives of people with MS.

## ***Goal #5: We develop and align human, business and financial resources to achieve breakthrough results***

### **Organization of Choice**

#### **Objectives:**

1. We create and implement strategies which attract, develop and retain the expertise, energy and commitment of talented individuals.
2. We align our resources, systems, processes and structure to achieve increased organizational effectiveness and efficiency.
3. We embrace and demonstrate behaviors that create an organization of choice for all constituents.

#### **Rationale:**

The Society is committed to being an organization that develops and sustains a culture of excellence and high performance because people are the heart of the MS movement. The continued growth of talented individuals is essential in achieving our vision of a world free of MS. To become an organization of choice, we must focus on operating as a unified organization with a culture of shared beliefs, values, and opportunities for growth and development.

Personal passion and connection lead people to the MS movement. An organization that recognizes leadership, culture and opportunity is what keeps people engaged.

- Streamline and unify our activities to increase our effectiveness and focus on mission priorities.
- Attract and develop talent to support mission-centered activities.
- Demonstrate our culture and shared beliefs and values through our individual and collective actions.
- Focus resources to align processes and structure around the mission.

#### **Implications**

- We will ensure that our volunteer recruitment and employment decisions and actions reflect our core values and demonstrate commitment to organizational beliefs and norms in everything we do. These activities will require investments in training, and we will set clear expectations that we will hold each other accountable for exemplifying agreed upon norms and behaviors.
- We will focus significant resources on the recruitment and retention of volunteers, and offer compelling opportunities for skilled volunteer leaders that meet their needs and interests, as well as help fulfill the Society's mission. This will require focused attention on opportunity development and proactive engagement of community volunteers.
- We will create and support a culture of continuous career development and learning by providing competency based training at all levels, and increasing the ability for all to be effective advocates in the MS movement. These additional core competencies may not be successfully achieved by all current staff members.

- We will strategically invest resources to acquire a competitive edge in the marketplace. This will ensure that we fully champion organizational brand culture in our recruitment efforts and talent management initiatives.
- We will adopt shared organizational platforms to increase our capacity, expertise and stability. These common systems and standardized policies and procedures will set clear expectations, establish expected behaviors, and create consistency. This will require an increased level of collaboration, integration, and accountability for behaviors and work processes.

### **Outcomes:**

- Human resource decisions will be values-based and competency-driven, with clear acknowledgment and recognition for contributions across the movement. As a result, talent turnover will be below industry standards. People affected by MS will have consistent experiences and lasting relationships with leaders in the movement.
- Human and financial resources will be consistently focused and uniformly allocated to the mission as a result of unified systems and procedures that yield greater efficiency and effectiveness. The creation of a singular organizational culture will enhance decision making and consistently develop and attract top talent, delivering on the trust placed in the Society as the center point of the MS movement.
- Individuals will seek out the Society and the MS movement for personal and professional engagement opportunities wherever they live or work. As an organization of choice, we will continue to be recognized in local communities and across the nation, enhancing our ability to attract all those who want to do something about MS now.
- Continuous learning and development opportunities will be provided, leveraging systems and tools available across the organization. Learning will be demonstrated through application of new knowledge and skills in meaningful ways, enhancing our ability to attract and retain top talent in the movement.

### **Fundraising**

#### **Objectives:**

1. We achieve a growth rate of 2% in 2011, 4% in 2012, 6% in 2013, 8% in 2014 and 10% in 2015, raising a total of \$1.2 billion over five years.
2. We increase revenue by building strong, active and purposeful relationships with individuals and businesses through exceptional customized service and state of the art tools.
3. We accelerate fundraising growth by fostering innovation and ensuring rapid implementation of best practices in new and existing campaigns across all revenue streams.

#### **Rationale:**

Due to the recent economic downturn, overall charitable giving has been significantly impacted. Despite these challenges, we have been able to increase the number of event participants and achieve growth in our individual and major giving programs during this time. These factors help position us for future growth. Further, most experts predict that the economy will improve over the next five years and philanthropic giving will increase correspondingly.

It is crucial that the Society leverage organizational and environmental opportunities in order to achieve continuous revenue growth to fuel our mission. Increasing our fundraising effectiveness and stimulating growth to prior levels achieved of 10% or greater will require focused investment across the organization.

- Leverage regional development and talent to extend and improve fundraising performance.
- Develop and deploy universal best fundraising practices.
- Facilitate the testing and rapid adoption of successful fundraising innovation and engagement.
- Build critical skills and tools that support the establishment of lifelong relationships with donors and fundraisers.

### **Implications:**

- We will increase our focus on relationships with donors, prospects and top event fundraisers by providing consistent, exceptional service and employing the right tools. Full engagement in programs such as Golden Circle and fundraising tools such as moves management systems will be essential to our success, and will require enhanced systems, standardized processes and new staff skills. Volunteers will assume key leadership roles in major gift fundraising.
- We will provide a clear and compelling case for dramatically increased research support by launching a comprehensive five-year research campaign that includes all Society research efforts. This singular focus will enable donors to identify and support research areas of personal interest.
- We will develop and maintain processes and systems that stimulate and reward innovation as well as enable the rapid adoption of successes across the organization. These activities will require the necessary long-term investment strategies to achieve success, while developing organizational tolerance for failure.

### **Outcomes:**

- The Society will raise a total of \$1.2 billion and significantly increase the annual number of donors and event participants engaged in the movement. The resulting trajectory for continued fundraising growth will propel progress across all mission activities.
- Individuals will contribute in the way they choose to support the MS movement, resulting in doubling research designated giving to the Society.
- The Society will be recognized as a leader in fundraising innovation both within the MS movement and by peer organizations and fundraising experts.

## **Infrastructure**

### **Objectives:**

1. We equip our employees and volunteers with the skills and tools necessary to work at their highest capacity.
2. We embrace innovation where new processes and tools will empower and elevate our employees and volunteers.

3. We streamline operational processes throughout the organization to increase our capacity to do more.
4. We maximize process efficiencies through the use of a robust set of standard systems and equipment.
5. We maintain a robust information management platform where information is delivered where and when it is needed to facilitate decision making.

**Rationale:**

The Society is committed to providing a wide range of programs and services that help people affected by MS address the complex needs of living with a chronic disease. The long term support and maintenance of these programs and services require well trained and experienced professionals and volunteers, the most effective and efficient business practices, and a consistently dependable and robust suite of technical tools. It is essential that we focus necessary resources and activities on the creation and maintenance of a sound business and technical infrastructure to increase our capacity and effectiveness.

The creation of this robust infrastructure requires ongoing resource investment in three primary areas.

- Technology tools that are integrated and consistent in the collection, maintenance and reporting of information.
- Unified processes that leverage technology and create efficiencies across the organization for the people who use them.
- Staff and volunteers have knowledge and skills to enter, access, understand and communicate information critical in their daily work and in support of people affected by MS.

**Implications:**

- We will inventory and understand the costs associated across all key areas of the organization in order to eliminate redundant activities and streamline operational processes, including financial, administrative, human resources, and IT. These activities will increase efficiencies and may impact human resources with potential position and responsibility restructuring.
- We will implement a centralized infrastructure that eliminates the need for individual chapters to implement and support computing platforms. This will create an integrated infrastructure that will increase our ability to best share and utilize information, as well as allow for universal staff and volunteer training programs.
- We will leverage our organizational purchasing power to maximize vendor relationships and pricing discounts. This approach will result in more consistent practices, cost-savings, and impact the way purchasing decisions are made.
- We will create staff mobility throughout the organization by standardizing tools and business processes that result in work consolidation at regional and national levels. This will further eliminate redundancy but will require new ways of doing business and increased training.

- We will create an organizational model to support innovative initiatives with pilot funding to stimulate ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking, provide a systemic testing model, and facilitate rapid adoption of successes and best practices.

**Outcomes:**

- More focused employee training and mentoring programs will occur through the standardization of business practices. This will enable employees to assist more readily when needed, and will result in additional collaboration and consolidation of work at regional and national levels.
- Organizational efficiency of daily business tasks will be achieved by streamlining our business practices that will lead to additional capacity for innovation and addressing areas of need. We understand the importance of timely and accurate information and ensure our systems, processes and tools are designed to leverage the best possible results.
- Overall cost of equipment ownership and maintenance will be reduced by centralizing and standardizing our technical infrastructure and computing platforms. This centralization of support services will provide a more effective means to support staff and volunteers across the organization.
- Organizational cost savings will be realized by leveraging the purchasing power of a single, large organization. We will be better equipped to apply resources where they are needed most.
- Fundraising, technical and program ideas will emerge more quickly through the availability of an organizational innovation fund. This support will encourage creativity and foster innovation to test and rapidly deploy activities that further the MS movement.