

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Research Shows Half of Local Residents Have a Connection to Multiple Sclerosis

PHILADELPHIA—A new research study shows that one out of every two local residents knows someone living with multiple sclerosis. Because of these results, the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter of the National MS Society is asking everyone who has a connection to MS to take action against the disease during National MS Awareness Week, March 12-18, 2012.

In order to establish a baseline measure of awareness of multiple sclerosis (MS), the chapter recently conducted a research study in the form of an online survey of a sample of 350 residents within the chapter's broad service area, which includes the five-county Philadelphia metro area, the Lehigh Valley and Southern N.J. Results show that 50% of those polled know someone living with MS and 21% have a close connection such as a good friend or family member living with the disease.

"We've all heard the term 'six degrees of separation,' the idea that everyone is on average approximately six steps away, from any other person," said Tami Caesar, president of the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter. "With 50 percent of local residents having a connection to MS, for us it's more like two degrees of separation. Whether it's a family member, a friend, co-worker or neighbor – we all know someone affected by MS."

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease of the central nervous system. People with MS are usually diagnosed between the ages of 20-50 and face unpredictable symptoms that can include numbness, blurred vision, paralysis and blindness.

As we celebrate National MS Awareness Week, March 12-18, the Society encourages all local residents to reach out to their personal connections and ask them to join the movement against MS. Whether participating in an event, donating, volunteering or spreading the word, everyone can join our commitment to raise funds for and awareness of a disease that affects thousands of families in our area.

At MoveforMS.org you can:

- Sign up for Walk MS, Bike MS: City to Shore Ride or MuckRuckus MS
- Volunteer at an event or at the chapter
- Make a donation
- Join our advocacy efforts by becoming an MS Activist

In addition, during MS Awareness Week, the Society will be hosting several events to educate local residents about this unpredictable disease, including the MS Experience Lab where people can experience some of the symptoms of MS.

For more than 50 years the National MS Society has been the leading provider of programs and services for people with MS including: home care, physical and occupational therapy programs,

care management, transportation, employment services, personal care supplies and financial assistance.

These services are only possible through public support. If you or someone you know has been affected by this disease, the Society asks that you join the movement to create a world free of MS. Visit MoveforMS.org or call 1-800-FIGHT-MS.

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Note to editors: Please contact Yarissa Reyes to speak with a local resident affected by MS or to partake in the MS Experience Lab.

Media Contact:

Yarissa Reyes

215-271-1500 x-24110

yarissa.reyes@nmss.org