



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

2011 Legislative Agenda

As Washington has one of the highest incidences of MS in the nation, we have a special obligation to care for our family members, friends, and neighbors who live with MS. The National MS Society believes the state has a crucial role in providing a safety net to people living with multiple sclerosis and other disabling, chronic diseases. The Legislature should adequately fund services that people living with MS rely on for their basic needs. Without these services and a balanced approach to the budget, many Washingtonians living with MS will suffer.

Our top priorities:

Allow skilled foreign-educated MS specialists to practice in Washington

Washington suffers from a significant shortage of neurologists – physicians who understand how to treat the unpredictable nature of MS. With a small change to the law and without a cost, we can allow more highly skilled American-trained physicians to practice in Washington and drastically improve care for people living with MS. **Support HB 1595**

Implement Health Care Reform

The Legislature should fully implement the Affordable Care Act, especially its consumer protections and the creation of health insurance exchanges. The law should not be challenged in the courts and needs the support of the Legislature. **Support SB 5445/HB 1740, SB 5122**

Stop Medicaid and Basic Health cuts

The Legislature should protect Basic Health and Medicaid funding for prescription drug coverage, Disability Lifeline, Medicare Part-D co-pays, and physical/occupational therapy. For people living with MS, access to prescription drugs can mean the difference between working or not working, putting additional strain on state resources. Support the federal waivers to save Basic Health and Disability Lifeline.

Protect funding for long-term care

Many people living with MS rely on long-term care programs like COPES, Adult Day Health, and respite care for their basic needs, including bathing, eating, and toileting. Long-term care is not an optional program, it's a necessity for many of the 12,000 people living with MS in Washington.

For questions, contact David Foster, lobbyist, at davidfoster9@gmail.com / (206) 372-8523 or Jim Freeburg, Advocacy Director, at jim.freeburg@nms.org / (206) 284-4254 x40237

National MS Society advocacy in Washington is coordinated by WECAN, the Washington Education Coalition Action Network, a collaborative effort by the Greater Northwest Chapter serving Western and Central Washington, Inland Northwest Chapter serving Eastern Washington, and the Oregon Chapter serving Clark County.

The National MS Society is a collective of passionate individuals who want to do something about MS now – to move together toward a world free of MS.