



ADVOCACY

May 14, 2010

CC: All

Health Care Reform Team Initiated

Now that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (health care reform, the Act) has been signed into law, the lengthy and complex process of implementing its many provisions has begun. To take best advantage of the many opportunities it affords to people with MS, their caregivers and professional providers, the Society has formed a team of home office and chapter staff to oversee the Society's continued involvement throughout the implementation process.

Team membership will evolve over the years of the law's full implementation, and will involve numerous other staff and volunteers on an ad hoc basis. The team will guide and support all relevant internal and external communications, education and training activities, as well as ongoing involvement in relevant advocacy activities as regulations and state laws are adopted.

Kim Calder will coordinate the team, and her position will move to the Advocacy Department. Kim will continue to be located in the New York City Home Office, and maintain strong ties to the Research and Clinical Programs Department.

Joining her on the Health Care Reform Team in 2010 are the following:

Lauren Chiarello, Director, Federal Affairs
Abby Carter Emanuelson, Director of Public Policy, Eastern North Carolina Chapter
Kris Erickson, Health Insurance Manager
Debra Frankel, AVP, Chapter Programs, Services & Clinical
Shawna Golden, Director, Marketing
Erica Kiehnhoff, Program Manager, Director Services, Mid-America Chapter
Martha King, AVP, Periodical Publications
Sharon O'Hara, Exec VP, Colorado Chapter
Bari Talente, AVP, State & Local Government Relations

Based on reports of the types of questions on health reform currently being asked by people with MS and others contacting the IRC, a Frequently Asked Questions

document is under development and will soon be posted on the national website, along with resource information for anyone wishing to know more. A feature article on these FAQs and resources will also appear in the summer edition of MOMENTUM, just as more provisions of the Act take effect.

Resources for advocacy and other staff will be posted on Sharepoint (see Health Care Reform Implementation in the Advocacy section.) The team will also explore other venues for information sharing and input, such as participation in regular meetings and calls, and encourages suggestions and invitations for participation.

For additional information, please contact Kim at kim.calder@nmss.org.



CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

May 14, 2010	CC: Development
<u>National Research Call on New MS Research and Drug Developments, including Highlights from the AAN Meetings to be Held May 20th at 3-4 PM Eastern</u>	

More than 10,000 researchers and practicing neurologists from around the world gathered at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) in Toronto April 10-17. Nearly 500 presentations related to research efforts to stop multiple sclerosis, to restore function, and to end MS forever. National MS Society grantees were among those presenting novel findings on many different aspects of MS research.

A special research call covering Exciting New MS Research and Drug Developments, including Highlights from the AAN Meetings will be held Thursday, May 20th at 3:00 PM Eastern. During the 60 minute call, Dr. Stephen Krieger and Dr. Patricia O’Looney will be interviewed by EJ Levy, President of MS Hope for a Cure. We will hear about major highlights in MS research from the AAN meetings, including the latest-breaking research and new therapies and treatments in the development pipeline.

Stephen Krieger, MD is an attending physician at the Corrine Goldsmith Dickinson Center for Multiple Sclerosis at Mount Sinai Hospital and is Assistant Professor of Neurology. He is the recipient of a 2006 AAN Scholarship and the Sylvia Lawry Fellowship in clinical research from the National MS Society. Dr. Krieger is currently participating in research on a variety of MS clinical trials and is studying clinical research design.

Dr. Patricia O’Looney has been with the **National MS Society** since 1988. She currently serves as Vice President of Biomedical Research, directing and overseeing the administration of the Society’s biomedical research funding programs.

National research calls are a great way for donors, donor prospects – including Golden Circle prospects – staff and volunteer leaders to remain abreast of the many avenues by which the Society is advancing discovery into the cause and cure of MS and to hear directly from some of the world’s leading MS researchers about the most progressive science.

Participation in national research calls is growing, as staff has embraced spreading research knowledge to various Society supporters who are critical to increasing awareness and funding of MS research. **We hope you will identify and invite participants in each of the**

following groups: major donors or prospects, major gift officers, chapter presidents, additional Society staff members, board members, significant event check writers, top event fundraisers, research advocates and Golden Circle members or prospects. The number of donors/prospects/volunteers that you invite should be consistent with your ability to make personal contact with participants after the call as suggested below.

****ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS NO LONGER REQUIRED: Dial-in directly at 877.860.4996, Conference ID 69470471. Please share these numbers with donors, staff and volunteers who intend to participate.** If there are multiple participants dialing-in from your chapter offices, please help us manage the costs associated with the calls by calling in from one phone line.

How You Can Cultivate Supporters through National Research Calls:

Identify constituents in the groups outlined above, especially those who have expressed an interest in MS research. Anyone who can get to a phone, whether in an office, home, city or rural area is able to participate. Also consider inviting prospects to join you and others for the call at the chapter office to provide greater participation and cultivation opportunities.

We suggest extending invitations via a conversation over the phone or in person, or via email. **The dial-in information may be provided directly to the participant, as registration for the call is no longer necessary.** If you would like a template email or letter invitation, please contact Mark Basson.

After the call, maximize this cultivation opportunity by speaking with participants about their call experience and exploring their interest in supporting research. The call will be recorded and one CD will be available to each chapter for duplication. Chapters may give the CDs to call participants, donors/prospects unable to participate and future prospects/donors and/or staff.

Calls are now available under the Research section of the national website at <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/research/research-news/ConversationswithMSResearchers/index.aspx>. The CDs and web link will be available approximately two weeks after the call; CDs must be requested. For additional information, an invitation template, or to request a CD recording of the call, please contact Mark Basson at Mark.Basson@nmss.org or by phone at 303.698.6100 x 15187.

Carrie Radant

National Director, Donor Development
303 698 6100 x 15165, + 800 923 7727



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

May 14, 2010	CC: Chapter Presidents
	Human Resources
Financial Planning Support: Update to FEP Program	

The Financial Education Partners (FEP) program was established in 2006 by the Foundation for Financial Service Professionals (FSP) to provide pro bono financial counseling and education to individuals with special health or financial circumstances. These services can be accessed through a referral from all chapters of the National MS Society to an FSP representative.

Dick Bell, founder of the FEP program and the National MS Society's primary contact, is in the process of identifying local FSP contacts for every chapter. If you do not know who your FSP contact is or need to establish a local contact, please contact Dick Bell at 1-866-591-1400 or dickbell@bell-financial.com.

Once your chapter's FSP representative is identified, you can begin to refer clients to the FEP Program. Generally, the process begins when an Information and Referral Specialist identifies and refers potential candidates to the chapter point of contact (POC) via a tickler in the database. Once the referral is made, and prior to sending the referral FSP, the POC should investigate what is available at the Chapter/Service Management level to ensure local resources have been exhausted. If a referral is still warranted, the POC should reference the FEP template that outlines the process, particularly the section on "Chapter Administration Process and Documentation Needed". The template can be found on SharePoint at Programs & Services/IRC/IRC Resources.

In addition to providing one on one financial counseling and education for National MS Society constituents, your FSP contact can enhance your chapter's programming by:

- Conducting financial planning seminars on topics ranging from basic budgeting to savings vehicles and retirement and estate planning as well as other employee benefits.
- Providing counselors for a "financial planning day" to meet for an hour with National MS Society constituents who have financial questions.

- Conducting a financial planning teleconference for National MS Society constituents who are unable to attend an in-person meeting.

In addition to providing programs and services to Society constituents, your FSP contact is also available to answer individual questions from staff and chapters related to financial and medical or other insurance issues.

If you have any questions about this outstanding program for people living with MS, please contact Cathy Castor, Director, Information Resource Center at 303-698-6100 ext. 15264 or cathy.castor@nmss.org or Dick Bell (contact information above).



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

May 14, 2010

CC: Marketing

MS Learn Online Leverages Video Content by Utilizing YouTube

MS Learn Online has recently added more than 300 videos to the redesigned [Webcasts & Podcasts](#) section of the Society's national web site. The redesigned pages, which leverage YouTube, make it easy for constituents to find all the educational video content they want on the Society's site. Additionally, the changes allow Society staff to quickly find video content, embed videos in Society web pages and social media pages, and provide constituents with unprecedented access to MS-related video content.

The Webcasts & Podcasts section on the national site now features the most current Feature Presentations, plus links to featured Daily Minutes, and Q & As. The main page also provides access to nine topic pages, each of which includes all available videos on that topic. All videos are categorized into the following topics: Basic Facts of MS; Treatments; Symptom Management; Healthy Living; Progressive MS; Research; Family Life & Relationships; Employment & Insurance; and En Español.

New Video Format Provides Flexibility and Access

MS Learn Online now leverages the video player and functionality offered by YouTube; we will no longer utilize the exclusive player in use for the past several years. The Society's national site leverages both embedded videos (small boxes that users can click to play the video "inside" the current page) and links to videos. The links open a separate window, which plays the video from its source location (within a playlist in YouTube). The playlists in YouTube match the topic areas on our site. This makes it easy to view featured videos without leaving our site, but users can also quickly click into the full playlist on YouTube.

Moving all MS Learn Online videos to YouTube provides a variety of benefits:

- Videos can be embedded in Society web pages (and other pages, like pages on social media sites). Chapter staff, home office departments, and even constituents can simply pull the code from YouTube and embed these videos, which will help get this content to more people.
- The ability to store massive amounts of video on YouTube means we can keep our complete library of video accessible without bogging down Society pages and impacting the performance of our site.

- YouTube offers vast functionality (embed windows of all sizes, double-click to go into YouTube, full-screen options, ability of anyone link to videos or embed videos where useful, statistics, playlists, subscriptions, ratings and comments, etc.) that the Society and our constituents can leverage.
- People will now find these videos in a variety of locations – not just on the Society’s national site. A video may be on the Society’s MS Learn Online topic page, but now it may also be found on the Society’s YouTube channel, a Google search, a chapter page, a chapter Facebook page, a constituent blog, a self-help group’s Facebook page, a video blogger’s YouTube playlist, Web sites of other organizations, etc.

If you are interested in subscribing to National MS Society on YouTube’s website (this is different than receiving MS Learn Online’s blast email) you can do so by creating a YouTube account (top right hand corner of the YouTube website) and then adding National MS Society to your subscription list.

MS Learn Online Continues to Add New Content

As MS Learn Online broadens its reach, it will maintain the current schedule of debuting a new Feature Presentation the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Anyone – including staff – interested in receiving e-mail notifications of upcoming MS Learn Online programs can e-mail the request to MSLearnOnline@nmss.org.

The following resources are available on SharePoint: (Topics > Programs and Services > Education Resources for People with MS > MS Learn Online) to assist chapters in marketing efforts: press release, program flyer, and newsletter article.

Upcoming on-line videos will include:

- The North American Education Program “Clinical Trials: Solving One Piece of the MS Puzzle”
- “Primary-Progressive Multiple Sclerosis: Perspectives on Moving Forward
- Managing Invisible Symptoms
- Oral Therapies
- Research News

Questions about MS Learn Online’s new format can be directed to John.Aden@nmss.org, Julie.Gibson@nmss.org or Chris.Yankee@nmss.org.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

May 14, 2010	CC: Chapter Presidents
Scholarship Program Awards and other news - 2010	

Thanks to all chapters for your participation in the 2010 scholarship program. Applicants have been reviewed and finalists selected. Notification letters will be mailed to all recipients and non-recipients on May 14th.

Stats: Nationwide we received 742 applications and awarded 295 new scholarships. In addition, 175 previous recipients were granted renewals so they could continue their educational goals.

New awards for 2010 total \$517,300, plus \$439,100 in renewals for a grand total of \$956,400.

Thanks: We would like to acknowledge the outstanding support of chapters, Diversified Developers Realty, Teva Neuroscience, CentiMark, the O'Donnell Family Foundation and the Modestus Bauer Foundation.

Top Scholars: The home office will recognize 23 top scholars and offer them the opportunity to apply to renew their awards. The names, photos and brief biographies of the top scholars will be posted on the website in June. See next page for list.

Publicity: Only the top scholars' bios and photos will be posted to the national web site. All recipients, however, are asked to email a digital photo to the home office by May 28th, and photos will be forwarded to chapters. Chapters can publicize their recipients via their local website, chapter newsletters and press releases. Please use your chapter website to recognize and honor your scholarship recipients. We have found that families are very proud to see their child recognized in this way, and this can be a good way to drive traffic to your site. You may also want to use your site as a reference for donors as you develop relationships for future funding. For chapters who find a 'Swiss cheese' template helpful, a press release template will soon be posted on SharePoint.

Altair: Please enter information about scholarship applicants from your chapter into the Altair database (both recipients and non-recipients). Chapters have often found that a scholarship application is the first (and single) contact that has been made by some families. Information to help with the Altair process has been emailed to chapters and is also posted on SharePoint.

2010 TOP SCHOLAR RECOGNITION

Imani Radney – NY City-Southern NY – Presidential Scholar

Morgan Ray – Lone Star – Mike Dugan Scholar

Christian McCurdy – All America Chapter

Mayra Monreal - Arizona

Amanda Chandler – Blue Ridge

Cassandra Ince – Greater Illinois

Jeffrey Breault – Greater New England

Colleen Flanagan – Greater New England

Brandi Brisco – Lone Star

Daryl Melancon – Lone Star

Rachel Waldman - Maryland

Melissa Day – Mid Atlantic

Mary Horton – Minnesota

Emily Buse – NY City-Southern NY

Carlie Rhinehart – North Central States

Sten Hansen – Northern California

Andrew Ritzel – Ohio Valley

Ashlie Walker - Oklahoma

Amber Charette – Rhode Island

Arielle Dennis – Southern California

Beatriz Benitez – South Florida

Ryan Maxfield – Utah

Rebecca Vallee - Utah

Andrew Eiland – Alabama-Mississippi – Recipient of Kathryn Dailey Scholarship

New Process for Home Office Funding Top Scholars

In the past, the home office has provided full funding for the most of the top scholars, and thus recognition was limited by our funding. This year will be different. Due to the limited amount of funding we have and our effort to spread around the funds to as many deserving students as possible, we will instead be supplementing whatever the chapter has already awarded the student so that their 2010 award is the max \$3,000. We will also provide each top scholar an equal opportunity to renew their scholarship for at least one year and up to 4 years. Renewals, however, will be competitive---dependent on the student's academic performance and renewal essay—and on our ability to obtain funding. Not all of the students will be renewed, even if they are doing moderately well in school. Chapters are not obligated to provide any funding for renewals, though we know several of you have this in your plans.

Rationale: Predicting who will succeed in college based on freshman–junior year high school transcripts is a somewhat inexact process. Often the difference between a student who got a multi-year scholarship and one who didn't was only a few points difference from our reviewers. By naming more top scholars and giving each equal opportunity to renew their scholarships, only those who continue to impress will be offered the benefit of a multi-year award. It will mean a little more work for our reviewers in subsequent years, but seemed more fair to the students.

Please contact Wenda Carlson with any concerns or questions.

FROM: Wenda Carlson
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RESEARCH/CLINICAL UPDATE

Keyword:	Estriol
Section:	TREATMENTS, INVESTIGATIONAL

MS Trial Alert: *UPDATED*
Clinical Trial of Sex Hormone Estriol Recruiting Women with MS to Participate

Summary: The National MS Society is funding a team of investigators at 16 medical centers to conduct a two-year, controlled clinical trial of an estrogen (estriol) added to standard therapy to treat MS. Investigators administer either oral estriol along with Copaxone® (glatiramer acetate, Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.) or Copaxone plus inactive placebo to 150 women with relapsing-remitting MS. If successful, this clinical trial could lay the groundwork for a larger, definitive trial that could lead to a new treatment option for women with MS, an option that would be a pill, not an injection. **Importantly, the exclusion criteria for the study have recently changed, such that patients previously treated with an interferon or Copaxone will no longer be excluded.**

Sixteen Centers Recruiting Patients: The estriol trial is taking place at 16 medical centers across the U.S. Women between 18-50 who are diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS and are interested in participating in this clinical trial should contact the nearest site to discuss their eligibility:

Institution	Coordinator	Phone
UCLA; Dr. Barbara Giesser	Mike Montag	310-794-4020
Washington University, St. Louis; Dr. Anne Cross	Debbie Kemp	314-362-3839
UMDNJ, New Brunswick; Dr. Suhayl Dhib-Jalbut	Yaritza Rosario	732-235-7099
OSU, Columbus; Dr. Deborah Joanne Lynn	Lisa Hafer	614-293-7877
University of Chicago; Dr. Anthony Reder	Mildred Valentine	773-702-9812
University of Utah, Salt Lake; Dr. John Rose	Julia Klein	801-582-1565 x2014
U. of Texas Southwestern, Dallas; Dr. E. Frohman	Gina Remington	214-645-0560
Johns Hopkins U., Baltimore; Dr. Peter Calabresi	Stephanie Syc	410-502-2488
University of Colorado, Aurora; Dr. John Corboy	Caitlin Walker	303-724-2198
U. of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Dr. Corey Ford	Lori Bachert	505-272-8905

The National MS Society is proud to be a source of information about MS. Our comments are based on professional advice, published experience and expert opinion, but do not represent individual therapeutic recommendation or prescription. For specific information and advice, consult your personal physician.

U. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Dr. Dina Jacobs	Vanessa Zimmerman	215-349-5162
Dartmouth Med. Sch., Lebanon, NH; Dr. L. Kasper	Kathleen Ryan	603-653-9919
U. of Kansas, Kansas City; Dr. Sharon Lynch	Kelly Dickerson	913-588-0080
U. of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Dr. Gareth Parry	Sarah Hilbert	612-624-5978
Columbia University, New York; Dr. Mark Tullman	Pat Mead-D'Alisera	212-342-8647
Mayo Clinic Arizona, Scottsdale; Dr. D. Wingerchuk	Irene Galasky	480-301-6140

This study, costing more than \$5 million, is being funded by the National MS Society – through the support of the Southern California Chapter and other chapters and private donors – and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Adeona Pharmaceuticals is providing drug for the trial.

Rationale: Estriol levels rise to very high levels naturally during late pregnancy, a time when most women’s MS disease activity declines. This led some to suspect that estriol may be responsible for this easing of symptoms during pregnancy. Dr. Rhonda Voskuhl (University of California, Los Angeles) and others explored this lead in mice with MS-like disease, and later, with National MS Society support, Dr. Voskuhl conducted a small, early-phase trial of estriol in 12 women with MS. Results in mice showed that estriol treatment was indeed protective. Results in the pilot trial showed that estriol treatment decreased disease activity in women with relapsing-remitting MS.

According to Dr. Voskuhl, the trial principle investigator, in using estriol they “aim to simulate some of the disease protection offered by pregnancy. We are very enthusiastic about this new agent since it has decades of known safety and since it will be given as a pill, not a shot.” She further states, "Estriol treatment also has the potential to be more potent in halting disability in MS, since estrogens have been shown in animal models to be not only anti-inflammatory, but also to directly reduce brain injury."

Trial Details/Eligibility: The two-year study is a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial that will take place at 16 sites in the U.S. (listed above). Investigators will administer estriol in pill form to women between the ages of 18-50 who have a diagnosis of relapsing-remitting MS. The oral treatment will be given in combination with subcutaneously injected Copaxone, a standard treatment for MS, for 2 years. The team is evaluating effects of the treatment combination on relapse rates and several clinical and magnetic resonance imaging measures of disability progression.

Contact: For more information, contact the study sites listed above, or please see the study’s listing ([NCT00451204](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT00451204)) on ClinicalTrials.gov.

-- Research & Clinical Programs

Copaxone is a registered trademark of Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.



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RESEARCH/CLINICAL UPDATE

cc: Chapter President, Programs

May 13, 2010

UPDATE: Experts Say DNA Testing Kits Can't Predict a Person's Chances of Developing MS

There has been recent media coverage of a plan for Walgreens retail stores to offer genetics testing kits that will be advertised as being able to give individuals information about their risks for developing specific conditions, including multiple sclerosis. MS is not directly inherited in the classic sense, but genes are thought to play an important role in determining who is susceptible to developing the disease, along with other possible risk factors. According to MS gene experts, at this time there is not enough information about the MS susceptibility genes to make it possible to provide practical, specific information about a person's chances for developing MS with the use of this type of DNA testing kit. The kits test for DNA variants that are relatively common in the population and are less predictive of disease risk than by simply determining if the individual is a woman, or a smoker, for example. Furthermore, receiving genetic information from the manufacturer without the input of a doctor or genetic counselor may well lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation of the results.

UPDATE: The U.S. FDA has sent a letter to the maker of the DNA kit, Pathway Genomics Corporation, requesting proof that the company has approval for its genetic health report.

[Read the letter \(http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ResourcesforYou/Industry/ucm211866.htm\)](http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ResourcesforYou/Industry/ucm211866.htm)

According to news reports, Walgreens has canceled plans to sell the kit.

Researchers need your help! Find out more about participating in MS gene studies. You can participate even if no one else in your family has MS.

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/research/researchers-need-you/participate-in-ms-genetic-studies/index.aspx>

-- Research and Clinical Programs Department



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RESEARCH/CLINICAL UPDATE

cc: Chapter President, Programs

May 14, 2010

Progress on Experimental Therapies for MS, CCSVI Forum, and Much More, Reported at the American Academy of Neurology Meeting

More than 10,000 researchers and practicing neurologists from around the world gathered at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) in Toronto from April 10-17. Nearly 500 presentations related to research efforts to stop multiple sclerosis, to restore function, and to end MS forever. National MS Society grantees were among those presenting novel findings on many different aspects of MS research.

New this year was a special Web forum that focused on CCSVI (chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency) and what it may mean to people with MS. was co-hosted by the AAN and National MS Society. View a recording of the forum

<http://hosted.mediasite.com/mediasite/Viewer/?peid=5625f9f8badd40eab1b1a3ebb41a8ba6>
and more information about CCSVI <http://nationalmssociety.org/CCSVI>

Also during the meeting, this year's winner of the National MS Society/AA N's John Dystel Prize for Multiple Sclerosis Research was announced. Professor David Hafler, MD (Yale University, New Haven, CT) was chosen by a committee of his peers for fundamental discoveries related to MS in fields such as immunology and genetics, and for bringing clinical importance to basic science findings. Read more about Dr. Hafler's work <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/research/research-news/news-detail/index.aspx?nid=3047>

(For free access to the abstracts of all presentations given at this year's meeting, go to: <http://www.abstracts2view.com/aan/>)

Read highlights of the meeting on Sharepoint:

http://intranet.nmss.org/Topics/cr/Pages/MS_Research_Progress_Reported_at_American_Academy_of_Neurology_Meeting.pdf



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RESEARCH/CLINICAL UPDATE

cc: Chapter President, Programs

May 7, 2010

Researchers pave way for the first coordinated international approach to MS stem cell research

-- small clinical trials of mesenchymal cells already under way

International consensus on the future of stem cell transplantation research for people with MS was published today, paving the way for more coordinated global research efforts and potentially better, and quicker, patient access to stem cell clinical trials. The guidelines, developed by an international panel of MS experts with input from MS Societies around the world, spell out hope for the future of MS stem cell research and debunk myths about overseas stem cell clinics claiming to cure the condition. The paper appears in the May 6, 2010 issue of *Nature Reviews Neurology*

(<http://www.nature.com/nrneurol/journal/v6/n5/abs/nrneurol.2010.35.html>).

The consensus is timely, since small-scale trials of stem cells, such as adult mesenchymal stem cells (from bone marrow and other bodily tissues), are already underway

(<http://www.nature.com/clpt/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/clpt201044a.html>) or in planning stages

(<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00813969?term=mesenchymal+stem+cells+ms&rank=1>) for the treatment of multiple sclerosis.

A public information booklet on stem cells, “Stem Cell Therapies in MS,” produced in partnership by MS Societies from the UK, USA, Italy, France and Australia and the MS International Federation, summarizes the current status of stem cell research in MS and frequently asked questions, and is available to download (.pdf) at

<http://www.mssociety.org.uk/document.rm?id=7495>

Professor Gianvito Martino from the San Raffaele Scientific Institute in Milan, Italy, and Professor Robin Franklin from the University of Cambridge, UK, are lead authors for the landmark guidelines, which:

- outline the promise stem cell transplantation has shown in early stage clinical trials and ways they could be used to treat MS in the future
- describe the different types of stem cells that might be used to treat different types of MS
- detail methods of delivering these stem cell therapies into patients
- highlight best practice in conducting clinical trials to evaluate the safety and efficacy of stem cell therapies in MS

The guidelines are the result of an international stem cell consensus summit held in London in May 2009 which was organized by the MS Society in the UK and USA, and supported by the MS Society of Canada, Italy, France, Australia and the MS International Federation.

Researchers have agreed that stem cells are likely to have a significant role to play in the treatment of MS, but also warn that expectations should be realistic. Professor Gianvito Martino said, “At this stage it is unreasonable to claim that stem cells are a magic cure for MS. It is, however, likely that they will one day play an important role in treating the condition.”

Dr. Patricia O’Looney, vice president biomedical research, National MS Society, USA reported, “This unique collaboration and sharing of information among MS specialists around the world will both speed and enhance the research that will one day lead to effective new treatments for those living with MS.”

Professor Robin Franklin added, “It is only by working together will we get the answer as to whether stem cell transplants hold promise in the treatment of MS. The guidelines will help the research community get to that answer more quickly than we would by working in isolation.”

-- Research and Clinical Programs Department