MS Research Funding

Request: Sign the Dear Colleague letters supporting
- 16 million for the MS Research Program
- $2.5 billion increase for the NIH
Pass legislation that reauthorizes PCORI

Strategic partners in MS research
- Funding to support a full compliment of MS research is the only way to expedite novel solutions for people with MS.
- In order to maximize the impact of MS research and patient care, the Society partners with federal partners to identify research gaps, remove redundancy, maximize complementarity, and leverage efforts.
- Consistent sustained funding is needed for researchers to pursue the next generation of solutions and target a cure.

Federal MS Research Funding Breakdown

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- NIH is the country’s premiere biomedical research institution and the largest funder of biomedical research funding in the world.
- All current MS disease modifying therapies (DMTs) are a result of NIH funded basic research.
- NIH funded $118 million in MS research in FY18.

MS Research Program (MSRP)
- The MSRP funds high-impact, high-risk projects to fill research gaps based on input from people living with MS.
- Since 2009, MSRP has funded over $51 million in MS research.
- In FY 18 MSRP was funded at $6 million.

Patients Centered Outcomes Research Institute
- PCORI funds comparative effectiveness research to determines which treatments work best, for whom, under which circumstances.
- PCORI must be reauthorized by September 30th to continue its important work.
- To date, it has funded $69 million in MS research to answer important questions in MS treatment that traditional research cannot answer.

The National MS Society: A driving force of MS research
- The Society supports research and treatment to stop disease progression, restore function, and end MS forever.
- To date, the Society has funded over $1 billion in MS research.
- Nearly 1 million people in the United States—more than twice the previously reported number—are living with MS, according to a landmark study.
  - Nearly 70,000 veterans live with MS.
  - Almost 12,000 have a service connected disability for MS.
Research Will End MS

“When you have a chronic, progressive disease, you don’t know what the next day is going to be like. There’s just so much unknown,” says Jim Turk, who was diagnosed with MS in 2008.

While a future with MS is unknown, Jim does know having robust funding for MS research is the only way to a cure.

Jim offers a unique perspective as someone who lives with MS, but also has a strong background in research. Holding a master’s degree in biotechnology, Jim has participated in clinical trials and has served as a consumer reviewer for the MS Research Program (MSRP), giving a patient perspective to reviewing research funding applications for the MSRP. He encourages others to get involved, in whatever way they can, in research.

“If you stop the funding or limit the funding, then where does that research go? Most likely, the research just ends,” he says. “Research is the thing that drives everything. You must fund research if you want to make advances in therapy and stop this disease dead in its tracks.”

Multiple Funding Sources Move Research Forward

Ellen Mowry, PhD, a clinician researcher and associate professor of neurology and epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University, has one goal: to help people affected by MS live their best lives.

“What I really love about working as a clinician researcher is that I am able to turn the questions my patients ask of me into research projects,” she says.

For her to achieve this goal, she depends on research funding from numerous sources, like MSRP, NIH, PCORI and the Society.

By giving researchers like Dr. Mowry increased funding from a variety of sources, they can pursue research projects with different goals and use the best possible study design to meet the goals of each agency.

For example, the MSRP often identifies topics of interest in the MS community and looks at funding requests that address them. Dr. Mowry's research on inhaled insulin was a response to an increasing need to learn more about cognitive impairment in MS. As well, PCORI has been instrumental to Dr. Mowry and her team, as it often provides awards to conduct larger clinical trials—her PCORI-funded project will examine whether early aggressive therapy can prevent or delay disability in people living with MS.

Increased funding for the MSRP, NIH and PCORI is the only way to get closer to the Society’s vision of a world free of MS. Dr. Mowry says: “Each of these sources tends to fund different kinds of research, and each plays a critical role in making meaningful advances for people with MS.”