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LETTER FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT
LISA GALLIPOLI
The holiday season is upon us – and with the holiday season comes the chance to spend time with family and friends – and the opportunity to think about what we want to accomplish in the New Year that is almost upon us! Here at the National MS Society we are thinking about 2017 and beyond.

We are embarking on our new BREAKTHROUGH MS campaign – a five year campaign to raise $1 billion to fuel breakthroughs that will change the world for people with MS. People with MS are relying on us to do whatever it takes to accelerate breakthroughs that enable people to live their best lives today and research breakthroughs that will ultimately end MS forever.

YOU are invited to join us in this campaign. No matter how you have been engaged with the National MS Society in the past we encourage you to increase your engagement this year – and create your own BREAKTHROUGH moment! Perhaps this is the year you join us at one of our 31 self-help groups in our chapter area – or join one of our monthly Can Do webinars. Maybe you have been participating in Walk MS and this is the year you decide to form a TEAM for the event? It could be that this year you work with your healthcare provider to identify a new mobility device that will provide more independence for you.

Whether it’s a solution for everyone affected by MS or personal breakthroughs for each individual, we will do whatever it takes. However you want to increase your engagement, we are here to partner with you.

TOGETHER, WE WILL BREAKTHROUGH MS.

With gratitude,
Lisa Gallipoli
President, New Jersey Metro Chapter
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732-660-1005

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PARTNERS IN MS CARE

The National MS Society recognizes and supports quality MS care through a program called Partners in MS Care. This program recognizes healthcare professionals in neurology, mental health and rehabilitation. Partners in MS Care:

- demonstrate knowledge and experience in MS care,
- have a special interest in treating people living with MS, and
- work closely with the Society

To learn more about Partners in MS Care, view the National MS Society website at: [http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Treating-MS/Find-an-MS-Care-Provider/Partners-in-MS-Care](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Treating-MS/Find-an-MS-Care-Provider/Partners-in-MS-Care).

NEW MS CENTER TO OPEN IN HACKENSACK

Hackensack University Medical Center, a member of Hackensack Meridian Health, is pleased to announce the arrival of Florian P. Thomas, MD, PhD, chair of the Neuroscience Institute and chief of the Neurology Division at HackensackUMC. Dr. Thomas is establishing a multiple sclerosis (MS) center at HackensackUMC.

Dr. Thomas’ treatment philosophy is to provide patient-centered, comprehensive care. “This is particularly important in the case of chronic conditions that challenge patients to be knowledgeable about their condition and advocate effectively for themselves, be engaged in their own care, juggle frequent appointments with different providers, optimize health behavior, avoid complications and maintain a positive attitude,” says Dr. Thomas. His goal is to be accessible to his patients, offering centralized care so patients can see him and other team members (PT, OT, counseling) during a single visit and to communicate effectively with other providers involved in a person’s care. The center is co-located with Hackensack’s urology and rehab departments and infusion center. “At times, patients with chronic illness can feel overwhelmed with the challenges of their own care; this may result in delays or missed opportunities in preventive care or treatment of co-existing conditions. Some patients with chronic illness suffer depression and sleep disorders,” Dr. Thomas says he is committed to helping patients access excellent services at HackensackUMC for all their needs.

For over 15 years, Dr. Thomas has worked closely with the Gateway Chapter of the National MS Society; his efforts were recognized when he received the chapter’s Pathlighter Award and a congressional proclamation. He now has joined the Health Advisory Committee of the New Jersey Metro Chapter. A practicing neurologist since 1987, he previously served as director of National MS Society Multiple Sclerosis Centers at St. Louis University and the St. Louis VAMC and a tenured professor at St. Louis University. He has extensive experience with clinical trials of MS drugs and plans to engage in research at Hackensack as well.

MS patients can reach Dr. Thomas at 551-996-8100.
**NATIONAL MS SOCIETY ADVOCACY UPDATE**

Every August, members of Congress return to their home states and hold town halls and other meetings with constituents. MS activists around the country take this opportunity to continue to build relationships with their U.S. Senators and Representatives. This August, MS activists throughout New Jersey held five meetings with their members of Congress and their staff to discuss our federal legislative priorities.

We spoke to members about the importance of MS research and why additional funding is needed. We asked members to provide at least $34.1 billion for National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the final spending bill. The NIH is the country’s premier institution for medical research. NIH-funded research has helped make significant progress in understanding MS lesions and how the immune system responds to different stimuli, as well as provided the basic research to develop MS therapies. We also asked members to provide $6 million for the MS Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) in the final 2017 spending bill. The MS CDMRP funds important, innovative MS research complementary to that of the NIH. Since 2009, the MS CDMRP has funded nearly $40 million for MS research projects. Activists also spoke to members about the Advancing Research for Neurological Diseases Act, which will create a nationwide system to track the incidence and prevalence of neurological diseases, including MS, which could one day lead to a cure.

During our meetings activists explained to their representatives how they have been affected by MS and the importance of our priorities. Those meetings were productive and members of Congress were receptive to our requests. If you are interested in learning more about our priorities or would like to attend a meeting with your legislators please contact Mara Brough at mara.brough@nmss.org or (267) 765-5104.

**BECOME AN MS ACTIVIST**

**Advocacy Opportunities:**

- Join the online MS Activist Network: receive updates and action opportunities on federal, state and local policy affecting the MS community. In just a few clicks, you can email your public officials about why an issue is important to you.
- Become a District Activist Leader: volunteer to be the face of MS for your elected officials. You’ll build and foster critical relationships with elected officials in your legislative district, and helping to solidify the MS grassroots movement across the country.
- Join the Government Relations Advisory Committee: volunteer to work strategically and tactically with the MS community and elected officials to change the lives of people impacted by MS.
- Become a digital MS Activist: use social media to establish and maintain relationships with your elected officials.

**How to get involved:**

Visit [www.nationalMSsociety/advocacy](http://www.nationalMSsociety/advocacy)

Contact Mara Brough, Senior Advocacy Manager at (267) 765-5104 or mara.brough@nmss.org.

**NEW JERSEY STATE ADVOCACY UPDATE**

We support efforts to provide home modification tax credits. These tax credits allow people living with physical disabilities caused by multiple sclerosis (MS) or other circumstances such as age, disease or result of an injury the ability to afford to modify their homes resulting in improved accessibility, increased safety, and much-needed independence. The National MS Society is supporting a bill in New Jersey, Senate Bill 2657/ Assembly Bill 3950 that would create a tax credit up to $2,500 to modify/refit an existing home.

We support legislation to expand access to health care providers with accessible offices by:

- Requiring health plans in New Jersey to provide reasonable accommodations in accessing providers for persons with physical disabilities.
- Requiring a health plan to reimburse an out of network provider visit using in-network rates if a person with a physical disability is unable to reasonably access an in-network provider.
- Requiring the State Health Benefits Commission to ensure that every new contract purchased provides procedures to ensure that individuals with physical disabilities have reasonable access to health providers.

- Will ensure that New Jerseyans have access to quality health care regardless of their mobility status.

Assembly Bill 1933 / Senate Bill 1261, passed the Assembly in March and is currently pending in the Senate.

Activists are working to pass Assembly Bill 1952 / Senate Bill 1285, the “Out of network-Consumer Protection, Transparency Cost Containment and Accountability Act.” This legislation would protect consumers again surprise out of network medical bills. This bill would establish the following:

- Consumers are held harmless for out-of-network charges unless they knowingly selected an out-of-network provider.
- Providers are required to provide consumers with an estimate of the cost of care.
- Consumers will be notified of provider network status in a timely manner.
- Network adequacy audits will be required of all plans.

[Image]

Pictured above from left to right: Emily, Patti and Kathy meet with Congressman Frank Pallone.
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has committed $25.3 million to 60 new MS research projects that hold promise toward stopping MS, restoring lost function and ending MS forever. In addition, funding for one-year grants for 11 new pilot projects will allow MS researchers to investigate high-risk, high-potential strategies to understand, treat and manage MS.

Studies that delve into genetic and environmental risk factors for MS include how vitamin D might protect individuals from developing the disease and how the influence of genes on immune cell activity might be a clue to stopping or preventing MS. Other studies are focusing on a range of strategies to stop MS progression or restore function. Following is a sampling of these promising projects.

THE NATIONAL MS SOCIETY HAS ALSO RENEWED ITS SUPPORT OF PEDIATRIC MS RESEARCH.

The five-year study will bring together two MS Centers of Excellence, Harvard’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the University of California, San Francisco, to develop a database of invaluable information that will be open to researchers anywhere in the world.

Another study, led by Dr. Claudia Lucchinetti and Charles Howe, PhD, at the Mayo Clinic and Foundation in Rochester, Minnesota, will conduct “metabolic profiling” of people with MS in order to better understand the role that metabolic stress, which spans a variety of problems in cells, including energy deficits and failure to recycle unneeded proteins, may play in MS progression.

An interesting study at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis explores the role that sex differences may play in the transition of relapsing-remitting MS, the most common form of the disease in women, to secondary progressive MS. Researchers have found that the entry of harmful immune cells into the brain during MS is partially mediated by a molecule called S1PR2, which occurs in high levels in women with MS. Blocking S1PR2 in mice with an MS-like disease appears to improve disease severity in female, but not male, mice.

RESTORING LOSSES

Research dedicated to restoring what’s been lost in MS focuses on understanding how nerves and their protective myelin coating normally work, how we can repair those critical tissues, and how restoring function may also include new strategies to manage common issues of MS.

One study at John Hopkins University is focusing on a promising compound that may improve cognitive function in MS. The compound, a molecule called GCPII, was shown in mouse studies to improve cognitive performance, but only in very high doses administered via injection.

Now, with the help of a drug discovery team with expertise in GCPII pharmacology, investigators are synthesizing and evaluating 20 to 30 new compounds to try to create an oral version. If they are successful, the compound could move to clinical trials to prove its safety and benefits.

Another study at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix hopes to follow how a type of immune cell called a Natural Killer (NK) cell interacts with brain cells, possibly interfering with the repair process. These cells have been found to remain in the brains of people of MS and in mice with an MS-like disease; eliminating NK cells in the latter was found to significantly improve their recovery.

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LIVING WITH MS

Restoring function may also include new lifestyle and wellness approaches. Studies focusing on these areas include an international multicenter trial of an online program to reduce MS-related depression.

While depression is a common symptom of MS, MS symptoms such as fatigue, cognitive challenges and mobility issues can make it difficult to attend in-person therapy sessions. The online program, called Deprexis, can be used in an individual’s home, eliminating the need for travel. Preliminary results have already indicated that the program may reduce depression in MS and researchers are now conducting a phase 3 trial at five MS centers in the U.S. and Germany in 400 people with MS.

Recent research has also suggested that some individuals with MS have difficulty in “emotional processing” – specifically, recognizing emotions from people’s facial expressions. A team at Kessler Foundation Research Center in West Orange, New Jersey, is examining the effects of an intervention aimed at improving emotional processing. The intervention includes interactive training and a computer program to help improve facial affect recognition.

To learn more about MS research and stay up to date on current studies, visit nationalMSsociety.org/research.
WELLNESS
ONE STEP FOR MS

The National MS Society, New Jersey Metro Chapter and the YMCAs listed below are proud to collaborate in offering a customized wellness program, One Step for MS. The program is a 12-week, 24-session wellness course designed for adults with MS. One Step aims to provide attendees with a comfortable and accessible environment to encourage empowerment via facilitated conversations and through therapeutic exercises, address the issues of fatigue, mobility, weakness and depression. For more information and to register for these programs, contact the YMAC of your choice below:

- **Hamilton**: contact Janice Nastasi at 609-581-9622 or jnastasi@hamiltonymca.org. Website: [www.hamiltonymca.org/locations/jkr-branch](http://www.hamiltonymca.org/locations/jkr-branch)
- **Madison**: contact Joe Gonsalves at 973-822-9622 x2242 or jgonsalves@madisonymca.org. Website: [http://www.madisonareaymca.org/](http://www.madisonareaymca.org/)
- **Fanwood-Scotch Plains**: contact Donna Peart at 908-889-8880 x104 or dpeart@fspymca.org. Website: [http://fspymca.org/](http://fspymca.org/)
- **Old Bridge & Freehold**: contact Lisa McGovern at 732-727-0704 ext. 301 or lmcgovern@ymcanj.org. Website: [http://fspymca.org/](http://fspymca.org/)

For more Wellness resources, including adaptive programs at Kessler, CentraState & YMCAs, visit our website: [www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NJM/Calendar/Programs/Wellness-Programs](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NJM/Calendar/Programs/Wellness-Programs).

You can download the Wellness Discussion Guide from the National MS Society from this link: [www.nationalMSSociety.org/wellnessguide](http://www.nationalMSSociety.org/wellnessguide).

2017 WEBINAR & TELELEARNING SERIES

The 2017 MS Webinar & Telelearning Series brings together a group of MS experts to help you build strategies for living your best life with MS. Each free webinar and telelearning program features two presenters with time for Q&A. Join us online or by phone on the second Tuesday of each month from 8:00 to 9:15 pm (EST). Topics and dates for January, February and March are indicated below (subject to change):

- **January 10** – GPS for Your MS
- **February 15** – Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations
- **March 14** – Weight Management and Nutrition

Two additional webinars are offered regarding employment issues:

- **February 28** - Discrimination and Your Job
- **March 21** - Navigating Workforce Departure

Registration for each webinar is required. For more information visit [www.nationalmssociety.org/telelearning](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/telelearning) or call 1-800-344-4867.

If you are not able to view/listen to Can Do MS webinars live, visit Can Do MS’s webinar archives any time: [http://www.mscando.org/webinararchive](http://www.mscando.org/webinararchive).

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MS

AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING

Volunteer leadership was recognized, Society achievements were highlighted and two interesting presentations were given at the Chapter’s Annual Meeting on November 13.

The first presentation was Cognition Research in MS, given by John DeLuca, PhD, Senior Vice President for Research, Kessler Foundation. He outlined the research on cognitive impairment in MS, explained cognitive reserve and potential therapeutic approaches to this problem.

Brian Mason, PT, DPT, Clinical Director of Rehabilitation Services, CentraState Medical Center then presented Rehabilitation and Exercise in MS. He described how activity influences your “new normal” (life with MS) and what you can do to maximize your function and to maintain or possibly improve your “new normal.”

Thank you to our sponsors for this program: Biogen and Sanofi Genzyme; additional support was provided by ACE Rx Specialty Pharmacy, Acorda, Allaire Rehabilitation, Amramp, Coloplast and MobilityWorks.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

APPLY NOW - DEADLINE IS JAN 18, 2017!

MS shouldn’t stand in the way of an education. This is why the National MS Society’s scholarship program exists — to help highly qualified students who have been diagnosed with MS or who have a parent with MS achieve their dreams of going to college.

Applications are accepted online only; the deadline is January 18, 2017.

Bike MS: Coast the Coast will take you farther than you’ve ever gone before. Enjoy coastal views and passing through seaside towns on flat terrain as you ride with 1,500 cyclists of all ages and riding abilities.

In addition, you’ll experience an incredible level of camaraderie as you embark on a journey filled with laughter, excitement, support and a profound sense of accomplishment. Your participation will drive MS research forward faster, and deliver programs and services to those who face the challenges of MS every day.

Register online at www.BikeMSCoasttheCoast.org

Bike MS: Country Challenge

Sept. 16 & 17, 2017
25, 50, 62 and 100-mile routes available

Ride with friends or push yourself to greater limits with this one or two-day cycling adventure through historic towns, pretty back roads, and around the Great Swamp.

Registration opens soon!
www.BikeMSCountryChallenge.org

For more information, email njmwalk@nmss.org or call 732-660-1005.
DO IT YOURSELF FUNDRAISING

With Do It Yourself Fundraising MS, the solution is yours to design! We are here to support you every step of the way, but you create your own path. You bring your fundraising vision to life and decide how you will mobilize your friends, family members, and those around you to give hope to everyone impacted by MS.

Mike and Carol Cook joined the movement by hosting their own creative fundraiser called Christmas Lights for MS! What you can’t see in this picture are the synchronized lights and holiday music that bring joy to their community while raising funds for the National MS Society. To kick off their event, they host an evening party filled with cookies, cider, pictures with Santa and more. From there, people can stop by on select days of the week during the holiday season. Visitors are asked to make a donation to the National MS Society.

“This charity is very important to us because our son was diagnosed with MS at the age of 13, in 2009. Last year, we raised over $5,800 and hope to beat that amount in 2016,” said the Cooks. “Not only do we enjoy raising money for MS, we also love spreading the holiday cheer and try to greet every person that comes by to see the show.”

Interested in learning more or creating your own DIY fundraiser? Contact Julie at 732.660.1005 or email julianne.falgiano@nmss.org.

LIVING WITH MS

FIVE WAYS TO HEALTHIER HOLIDAYS

BY MARCELLA DURAND

Staying on a diet can be tough even under the best of conditions—which holiday gatherings of family and friends definitely aren’t. But there are ways to stay strong. Following are some tips that may help you steer toward healthier holiday eating.

1. Plan ahead. Look at your schedule for the next month or so, and identify where you’d most like to be and what you’d most like to do, keeping in mind what will be easiest on you and your eating needs. If you’re hosting, plan a simple menu that includes fruits and vegetables—which can be easier to prepare than other dishes. For instance, prewashed salad can just be put in a bowl with some olive oil and vinegar on the side, while grapes make a sweet and easy after-dinner treat.

2. Control your environment. Try skipping that large holiday party in favor of a small potluck gathering of friends and family. That way, you’ll have more control over what food will be in front of you. Bring a salad or plate of raw-vegetable crudités to ensure that a healthy and delicious option will be available. Fill your own plate to ensure you’re not overserved. If you must go to the large party, snack on something healthy ahead of time so you don’t arrive starving.

3. Say no. It’s OK to say no to second servings, desserts, another glass of wine or even staying too long. If you find yourself sticking close to the food table and stuffing yourself because a party is too loud and conversations too difficult to follow, don’t feel bad about leaving early—your hosts will appreciate the time you were there.

4. Manage expectations (and be easy on yourself). If you eat something you shouldn’t, it’s not the end of the world—everyone lapses occasionally. Take control by selecting special treats that you’ll really enjoy, such as a bit of cheese or a special dessert. And then balance them out with more salad or other healthy options.

5. Substitute. Swap olive oil for butter, fish for meat, vegetables for stuffing, and fruit and nuts instead of dessert. The possibilities are endless for healthy and delicious alternatives!

To learn more about healthy eating and MS, visit nationalMSsociety.org/diet.

Marcella Durand is a writer and editor who lives in New York City.
MuckFest® MS New Jersey is the FUN mud & obstacle 5K. No special training required!

We’re also on a mission to end multiple sclerosis: 100% of your fundraising dollars benefit the National MS Society. Have a blast and make a difference!

JUNE 24 & JUNE 25, 2017

REGISTER AT MUCKFESTMS.COM