

Bringing wellness into focus



**Cyndi Zagieboylo,
President & CEO**

Through programs and services, research and advocacy, the Society is renewing its focus to help people with MS maximize wellness.

by Cyndi Zagieboylo

In this issue of **Momentum**, you'll read about people with multiple sclerosis who are taking steps to improve their physical fitness, as well those who are seeking ways to stay socially engaged and connected throughout the summer months. You'll learn about the latest research in sleep, and proactive strategies for maximizing bowel health. What do these topics have in common? They're all aspects of wellness.

We know that wellness is on your mind, and it's on ours, too. During our recent outreach to

Society constituents—as we developed our strategic plan for the next several years—we asked what it’s like to live with MS today. We heard over and over that things like exercise, emotional well-being, nutrition and social engagement are top of mind. We know that you’re looking for solutions to move your lives forward, in your own ways.

We also know that wellness takes many forms. It can be emotional, physical, social, occupational, spiritual or intellectual. Some people may find that certain aspects of wellness are more urgent, important or meaningful to them at certain times in their lives, and we want to support that.

In essence, we want to help people rise to the challenges that life with MS presents, and live their best lives, whatever that means to them.

Of course, we’ve always had wellness programs at the Society. But we need to do more. Just as there are many aspects of wellness, there must be multiple facets to the Society’s approach, and we are putting renewed emphasis on those. For instance, our advocacy efforts promote access to care and expanded insurance coverage, so that people with MS can receive mental health services, exercise programs and other wellness interventions as well as MS medications.

We’re supporting wellness research to fill gaps in our knowledge so people can make informed decisions in moving their lives forward. We have already learned critical information about obesity, smoking, vitamin D and exercise. However, we still have many unanswered questions and we are driving research forward to answer them.

Through our work and our conversations with you, we’ve come to understand that “wellness” isn’t a thing; it’s everything.

Wellness is how we live our lives. It is as individual as each of us.

At the Society, we want to provide whatever you need in your quest to live your most powerful life. What can we do to support your wellness priorities? Please drop me a line. I would love to hear about your ideas and your experiences as you strive to live your best life.

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Let me know your thoughts about wellness. Email me at cyndi@nmss.org.