

A letter from Cyndi Zagieboylo: Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

by Cyndi Zagieboylo



Diversity, equity and inclusion have been a commitment at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Our work is evolving as we continue to learn and grow.

After the death of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 and increased public awareness about inequities in the Black community, we renewed our efforts to confront and address the disparities in the healthcare system. We expanded our outreach. We listened — seeking to hear and understand the perspectives and realities of people of color in being diagnosed, finding healthcare partners, and receiving the treatments and support they need.

As we learn, we strive to improve. Creating space for active listening and discussion has become a discipline of ours. At the start of Society meetings, we take turns reading our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement, giving the person reading the statement an opportunity to provide a personal perspective. Each word has been carefully chosen to describe what we stand for:

Diversity, equity and inclusion statement

- The National MS Society is a movement by and for all people affected by MS.
- Our voices and actions reflect diversity, equity and inclusion.
- We welcome and value diverse perspectives.
- We actively seek out and embrace differences.
- We want everyone to feel respected and be empowered to bring their whole selves to ensure we make the best decisions to achieve our mission.

Our plans include specific milestones to address disparities in MS healthcare and make space for marginalized groups. We know that diversity, equity and inclusion must permeate everything we do — as a consistent and first consideration, not a one-year, check-the-box activity. We must persist, grow and get better by increasing the diversity and inclusion of our staff and volunteer workforce and ensuring we are an anti-racist organization in everything we do.

The Society is committed to creating a world where everyone — of every race and every ethnic background, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community — can live a life free of MS. The disparities that keep anyone from receiving today's care must not keep them from receiving tomorrow's cure.

What does our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion statement mean to you? As always, I'd like to know what's on your mind.

Let's keep in touch.

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President & CEO
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Let me know your thoughts. Email me at cyndi@nmss.org.