

Fighting for high-quality health care



by Cyndi Zagieboylo



**Cyndi Zagieboylo,
President & CEO**

We at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society believe that everyone—including people with MS—should have access to high-quality affordable healthcare. People living with MS need specialty care and access to MS medications that is affordable, simple and transparent. A set of six principles (see sidebar) drives our work on this issue and helps us focus, regardless of current events.

“Healthcare is one of the Society’s highest priorities in our advocacy work,” says Bari Talente, executive vice president, advocacy, for the Society. That takes many forms: legislation at the state and federal level, the regulatory process, and joining with other organizations in lawsuits to protect healthcare for people with MS on issues such as safeguards for people with pre-existing conditions. “We want to make sure that the perspectives of people living with MS are always part of the conversation,” Talente says.

And we are relentless in ensuring that policymakers and lawmakers understand what people affected by MS need. Together we are stronger with more than 300 district activist leaders and an online network of 55,000 activists across the country. We are on the front lines talking to public officials about programs and policies that will benefit people with MS. Will you join us? It’s a powerful way for you to take action and make your voice heard. You can learn more about our advocacy priorities and find information about becoming an activist or district activist leader at [Advocate for Change](#).

Access to high-quality MS healthcare principles

1. People with MS are at the center of their healthcare decision-making.
2. People with MS have access to a comprehensive network of providers and healthcare services focused on producing the best outcomes at affordable costs.
3. People with MS have access to comprehensive health insurance plans with affordable premiums, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses.
4. Healthcare providers have greater awareness, resources and tools to enable the timely diagnosis, treatment and symptom management of MS.
5. People with MS have access to and receive high-quality MS care regardless of disparities, including but not limited to disease progression, level of disability, geographic location, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, cultural background, age and care setting.
6. People with MS have access to quality long-term supports and services (including assistive technology) in settings that best meet their needs and prevent financial hardship for the individual and family.

One more thing to know about your National MS Society: We are tackling access to MS healthcare from every angle. A team of MS Navigators is focused on keeping up to date on the ever-changing landscape, and they are partnering with each person who needs support to get access to healthcare and MS medications. Erin Poznanski, vice president, MS Navigator services delivery, describes this important service. “MS Navigators provide one-on-one, customized support to each individual and family—because every person’s experience with MS is different. Anyone in need of support in understanding these complex issues should connect with an MS Navigator.” Connect with an MS Navigator today by calling 1-800-344-4867, via email at ContactUsNMSS@nmss.org, or [through our website](#).

As always, I'd like to hear from you. Have you contacted your state or federal legislators about healthcare issues? What has your experience been?

Let's keep in touch.

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