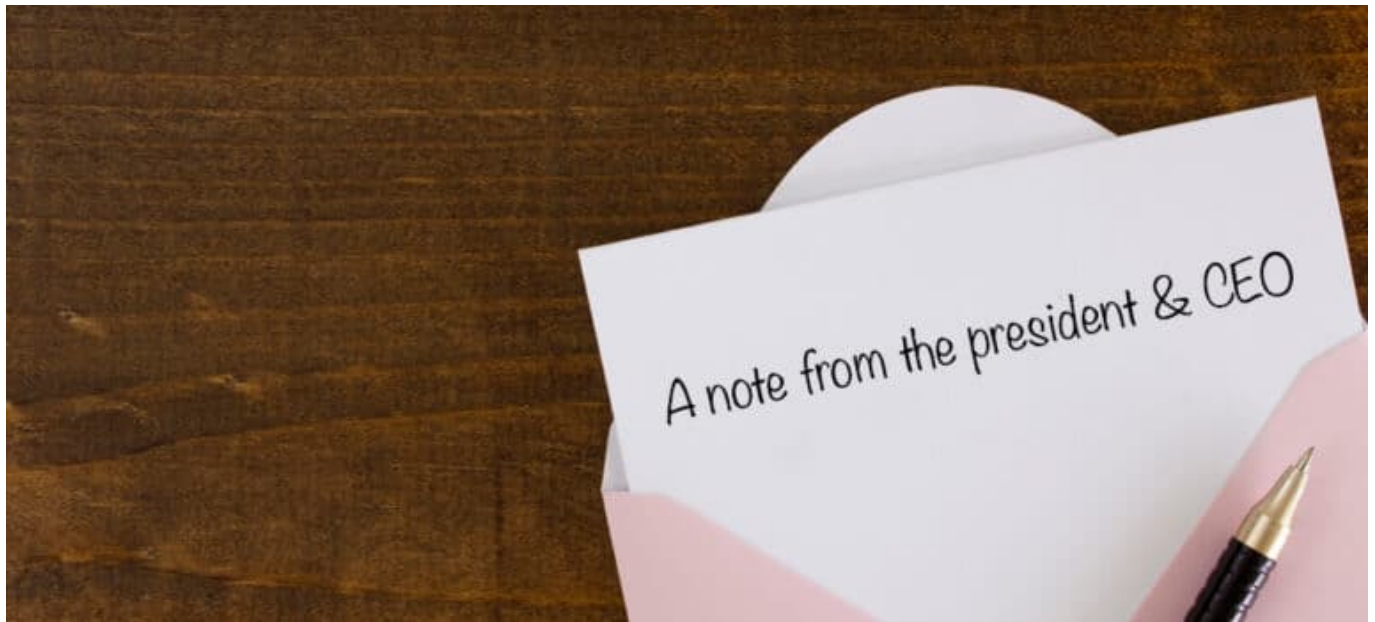


A message from Cyndi Zagieboylo: Reflecting on what's ahead



**Cyndi Zagieboylo,
President & CEO**

Perhaps with this change of season and upcoming new year, you take time for reflection while considering what's ahead. It's a common practice and one that can be motivating and rejuvenating.

At National Multiple Sclerosis Society board, committee and staff meetings, we have a year-round practice of reading and reflecting on our mission and diversity, equity and inclusion statements. We express out loud the personal meaning of our shared purpose and principles.

It can go like this. “Our mission: We will cure MS while empowering people affected by MS to live their best lives.” I read this powerful statement with conviction and belief. We are prepared and committed to do what it takes to achieve MS cures. This is not a pie in the sky idea. It’s real — built on 75 years of progress in science and a strong, thriving MS movement focused on cures for MS.

Our [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#) describing the steps needed to stop MS, restore lost function and end MS forever has been endorsed by every major MS research organization and MS advocacy organization worldwide. And while we seek cures, we are committed to “empowering” people to live their best lives — that’s different than “serving.”

Our Society is organized to partner with people to be what they need to make the best decisions for themselves — to move their lives forward in their own ways.

Our 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 empowered to **bring their whole selves** to ensure we make the **best decisions** to achieve our mission.

The words in bold type (in the box on the right) are the ones I emphasize upon reading our diversity, equity and inclusion statement aloud. It’s moving to me and a reminder to listen to perspectives, recognize differences of opinion, seek first to understand, and be curious about lived experiences, especially of those people whose circumstances and origins vary significantly from mine. While we are all more alike than different, and the intersection of MS brings us together, there is much to learn from each other. We are so much stronger together than individually.

So, at the opening of our meetings, we take turns reciting and reflecting on our shared mission and beliefs. We give ourselves room to think — to take a deep breath and reflect before we dive into what we want to accomplish — before we begin the task of what we came together to do.

I invite you to consider this practice and share your reflections with me. Let’s keep in touch.

Cyndi Zagieboylo
President & CEO
National MS Society

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