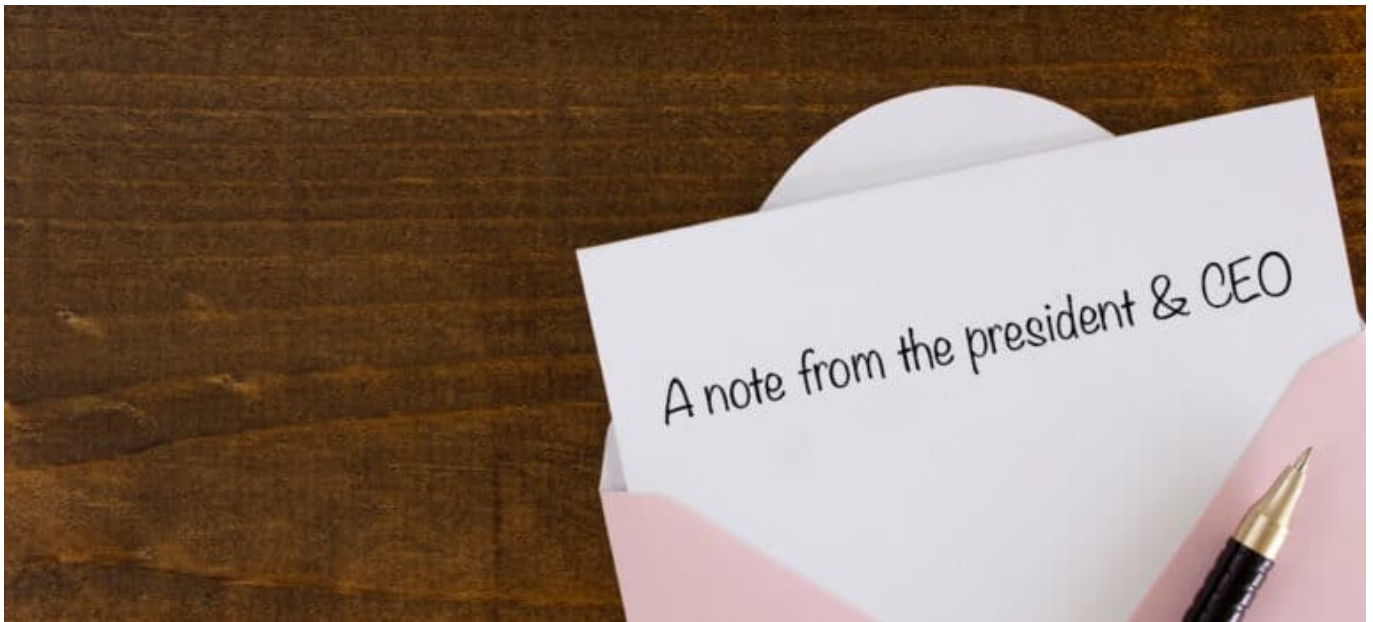


A letter from Cyndi Zagieboylo: A test of resilience



by Cyndi Zagieboylo



The past two years — through 2020 and the beginning of 2021 — have been a test of resilience for all of us. We had to rise to face the pandemic, an economic recession, greater awareness of racial disparities and heightened social unrest. We had to adapt to meet challenges head on. We found that our MS movement is strong — support and encouragement can come from everywhere.

When the pandemic started in spring 2020, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society took a big hit. We experienced a sudden drop in revenue and had to cancel hundreds of events and programs.

The good news? We were prepared. We had disaster recovery and contingency plans that we activated immediately, so we could maintain a solid, stable organization while we addressed the immediate questions and concerns of people affected by MS.

We expanded connections and launched new research to learn about COVID-19 and MS. We rose to meet challenges, thanks to you and those in the MS movement. One way that has happened is through leadership volunteers, especially on our advisory committees. These committees work in concert with each other to tackle the Society's strategic plan and address current events.

For example, the use of telemedicine, for which we have been advocating over many years, became crucial during the pandemic. As people became more familiar with telemedicine, many became more comfortable with it. We saw an opportunity to expand access to healthcare immediately, as well as over the long run. Our National Medical Advisory Committee stepped up to develop guidelines for neurologists for successful virtual healthcare visits with people with MS. At the same time, our Activism Advisory Committee focused on insurers and Medicare to cover [virtual visits as a routine part of MS care](#), continuing into post-pandemic times.

When COVID-19 vaccines became available, people with MS wanted to know, "Should I get vaccinated?" Our National Medical Advisory Committee brought together experts in the fields of vaccines, MS and viruses and [developed guidance](#), gaining international consensus along the way.

You can help build our MS movement. Ask your healthcare providers about their connections with the Society. Let them know that the Society is here to support them, too. Become an [MS activist](#) and amplify the voices of people affected by MS on the issues important to our community. Connect with others through a fun and interactive online version of [Walk MS](#). Watch videos and find information about the event. Start a team and bring people together.

There's a place for everyone in the MS movement. How are you participating in your National MS Society? I would love to hear from you.

Cyndi Zagieboylo
President & CEO
National MS Society

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