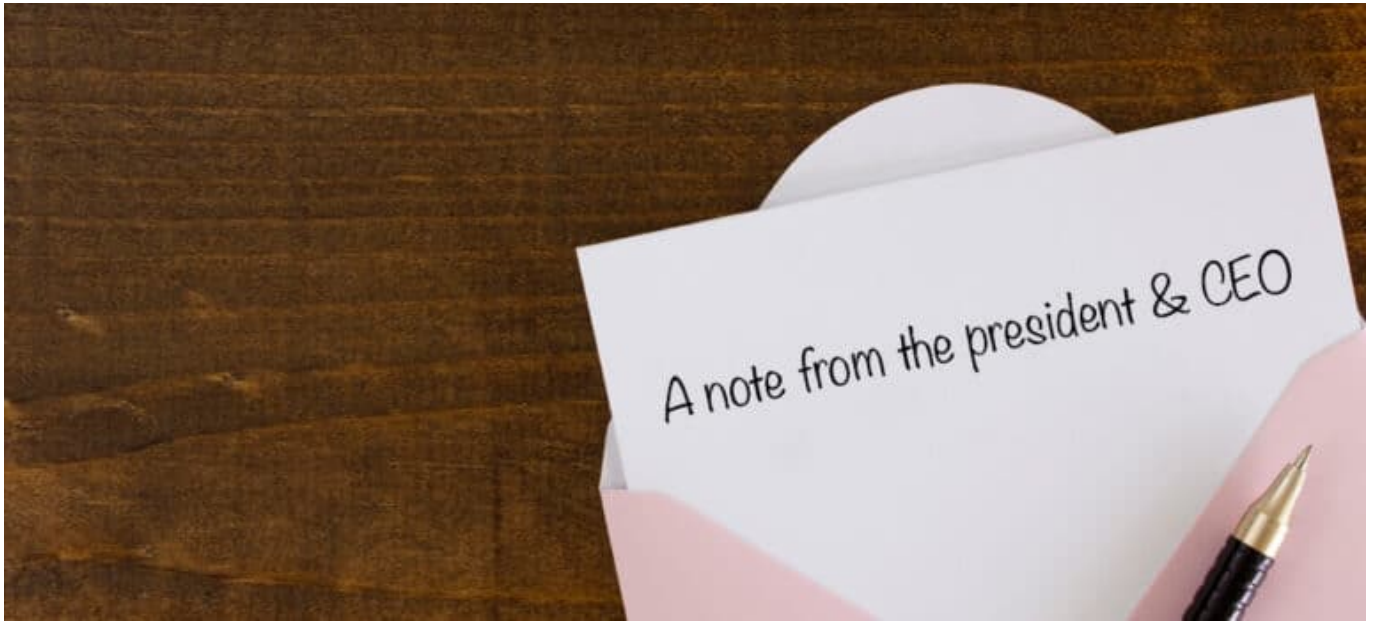


Staying power



by Cyndi Zagieboylo



We plan for many contingencies, but we did not plan for a pandemic. And we were not alone. It seems the world was unprepared. However, the MS movement is resilient. We are resilient.

We are a movement, by and for people affected by MS. And because of the strength that we gain from each other, we will absorb the blow of this pandemic, and we will persevere to ensure people can live their best lives as we pursue pathways to a cure.

When the pandemic hit, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society moved swiftly in response. We activated disaster recovery and crisis response teams, closed our offices to shelter in place and maintained business continuity. We launched a COVID-19 web page and held weekly webinars for people affected by MS. We provided MS healthcare providers COVID-19 and MS webinars in conjunction with the Consortium of MS Centers. We launched a data-sharing

initiative to contribute to COVID-19 and MS research. MS Navigator services were uninterrupted. Many self-help group leaders shifted to virtual meetings.

No one should face MS alone — we are here.

The long-term implications of this pandemic remain unclear. Here is what we know: The viability of large, event-based fundraising is uncertain, at best. When and how we may be able to bring groups of people together for a shared in-person experience is unknown. As a result, our fundraising took a hit. We will continue to make changes to live within our means and, for some time, the National MS Society will be a smaller organization in revenue and staff. We will continue publishing Momentum magazine. However, the local MS Connection newsletter, which was mailed alongside Momentum magazine, will be discontinued.

Some things have changed fundamentally. But our commitment to people affected by MS has not.

We will ensure that people living with MS have current, accurate and comprehensive information on MS. We will innovate — increase virtual opportunities to connect and learn and fundraise. We will continuously improve MS Navigator services, so everyone can connect with a supportive partner to overcome MS challenges.

Visit our website at nationalmssociety.org to get up-to-date and reliable information about the coronavirus and search for ways to connect with others. You can contact an MS Navigator by calling 1-800-344-4867, emailing ContactUsNMSS@nmss.org, or visiting us online at nationalMSSociety.org/navigator.

Now more than ever, it is vital that we stay connected.

How are you holding up? Please share your stories of or your need for resilience.

As always, I would love to hear from you.

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