

What does a cure for MS mean to you?



by Cyndi Zagieboylo



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We want a cure for multiple sclerosis.

What does that mean to you?

Cure is a powerful word that means different things to different people. Some see it as eradicating disease such as when vaccines were developed for polio and smallpox. For

others, it might mean an immediate halt to disease progression or restoring lost function. Leadership volunteer and passionate activist Bill MacNally describes a cure this way: “That’s when I’ll be saying, I USED to have MS.” And I’ve heard others share their view by saying, “Don’t worry about me. Just make sure that my children and my grandchildren don’t have to worry about getting MS. For me, that would be a cure.”

Regardless of the definition, we at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society are relentless in our pursuit of finding a cure. But as you can see, we need a cure for everyone. And just as there are different definitions of what a cure is, there must be different approaches—different pathways—to working toward that cure, or cures.

We tackle this big, important issue by bringing people together to focus on solutions. People who have various perspectives, expertise and experience share information about the most promising and fastest ways forward. Scientists with expertise in immunology, genetics, neurology and epidemiology. Health care providers, including physical therapists, nutritionists and psychologists. And most important, people with MS and family members.

We must be clear about what we must achieve so we can make decisions about the best research investments. People affected by MS are essential thought leaders.

In the Society’s upcoming strategic plan for 2019 through 2021, one of the four impact statements is “Deliver Breakthroughs to a Cure.” We want people to know what they can do right now to take control of their MS and live better while we relentlessly pursue a cure. One way we will measure our success is to reach an international consensus on pathways to a cure so that we can all be clear about what we are going for—cures for each person.

What do you think? What does a “cure” mean to you? I’m interested in your perspective. Let’s keep in touch.

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