



North Central States Chapter
 2508 S. Carolyn Ave.
 Sioux Falls, SD 57106

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Advocacy In the North Central States Chapter

By Rachel Harvey, volunteer

As a nonprofit organization, an important part of what the Society does is advocacy. In order to keep people moving, members of the MS movement advocate for

measures that would enhance the lives of those that live with MS, as well as other disabilities. The North Central States Chapter works in several different ways to advocate for MS.

Patty Brooks, Director of Client Programs and Services for the North Central States Chapter, spends much of her time working with advocacy. Recently, Patty wrote a case study demonstrating how states can bring about change without additional fiscal responsibilities. She used the example of South Dakota's efforts to eliminate barriers in the community. After several bills failed to pass that would address inaccessible

public structures, the National MS Society, partnering with several other organizations, is trying to take a new approach to solving the problem. The group offers several solutions that would help to bring about

new policy changes through compromise, collaboration, or legislation, none of which would have fiscal impacts to the state.

Another way in which the North Central States Chapter is bringing change through advocacy is with Government Relations Committees (GRCs). Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota each have a GRC to help advocate for people with disabilities at both

the local and state government levels. The goal of these committees is to educate the public about disabilities in general and MS in particular.

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Patty Brooks, Director of Programs and Services for the North Central States Chapter with Susie and Pat Simmers, local activists, on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Purchase your ticket today for elegant fundraisers across the chapter!

A Taste of Generosity

Enjoy wine and a fine meal while you bid on rare vintages and unique gift packages in a live and silent auction on January 31, 2009 at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott. Tickets are \$100 each.

Little Black Dress for MS Luncheon and Silent Auction

Hear from a world champion cyclist who also has MS, Maureen Manley, at this luncheon on February 5, 2009 at the Ramada Plaza Suites in Fargo. Tickets are \$35 each.

Little Black Dress for MS Champagne Luncheon and Fashion Show

Maureen Manley will also be the keynote speaker at the Sioux Falls luncheon on February 6, 2009. Tickets for this event, which includes a fashion show by Professional Image by Rosemary, are \$35 each.

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Publication of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society - North Central States Chapter

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In South Dakota, the GRC encouraged some of Aberdeen's city employees to use wheelchairs for a day to better understand the limitations of a disability. The GRC is also concerned with the lack of mandated insurance to cover MS injectables and is researching how other states have affected change in the insurance industry. They plan to hold MS Day at the Capitol on January 29, 2009.

In Iowa, the GRC is trying to get lobbyists and working on long-term care and independent living initiatives. Although there is a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program, which provides state assistance for in-home healthcare, they see a problem in that there is a limit to the number of people who are able to receive in-home care through this program, and they hope to change that. MS Day at the Capitol is planned for March 4, 2009.

North Dakota's legislature only meets every two years, so this year the GRC is focused on planning what measures they will take on in the next session.

Recently, the efforts of the Society's MS activists were a success as they brought about change in public policy legislation. The ADA Amendments Act, which was advocated by the Society and sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, brings millions of people back under the protection of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This amendment especially benefits those with MS as they may not have previously been covered under the ADA because the disability is often controlled by medication, episodic, or does not always restrict major life activities. Because of the efforts of MS activists, those with MS can now expect reasonable accommodations in the workplace under the protection of the ADA.

Make your new year's resolution to become an MS activist. Contact your local office today and see how you can bring about change in 2009. ■



Manager's Message

I have often wondered about several questions through my work here at the North Central States Chapter of the National MS Society: what is advocacy? Who is

an activist? What does being an activist mean? Our chapter has not proactively done a lot of work in the area of advocacy in the past, but 2009 is the year that we are going to see some significant changes.

First, we are ramping up our efforts federally, by inviting anyone who is interested, to join us at the Public Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 9-11, 2009. This three-day trip includes one full day on Capitol Hill meeting with our elected officials and advocating for the passage of legislation that will positively impact the lives of people with multiple sclerosis. I have gone to this conference for the past several years; it is a wonderful experience and I would highly encourage anyone who wants their voice to be heard to consider joining us.

Second, we have started Government Relations Committees in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa. These committees will focus on state and local legislation and influencing change in the rural areas of our states.

So, how do you know if you are an activist? Advocacy, in three words, is telling your story. A personal story can paint a picture that facts and figures just cannot. Almost everyone is able to talk about themselves or their experiences with multiple sclerosis and that is the foundation of grassroots advocacy. If you want to tell your story and influence change, you are an activist.

My philosophy for advocacy for the chapter is this: none of us are immune from the uninvited or unexpected. MS

strikes more than 8,000 residents in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa – that's one in every 500 of our closest family, friends, and neighbors. If you live with MS, or if someone close to you lives with MS, you are a credible expert. Your personal experiences empower you to advocate.

Do other organizations advocate? Yes, there are over 2,172 organizations registered to lobby in our chapter in 2008-2009 (North Dakota with 349, South Dakota has 307, and Iowa has a whopping 1516). These are organizations like the AARP, American Red Cross, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, American Cancer Society, and the AIDS Resource Center. Those are the organizations that we hear so much about on the news - why? Because they are activists for change.

Why should the Society advocate? We can unite our voices to create, modify, or abolish law; to allocate, reallocate, or eliminate public funding; to foster a positive social and economic climate; and ultimately to eliminate multiple sclerosis. What becomes federal, state, or local law is truly dependent on who is engaged, how many are engaged, and the social and fiscal climate at the time.

So, the only question remaining, is...why not be an activist? For more information on the advocacy efforts or our chapter, please feel free to contact me at patty.brooks@nmss.org.

Respectfully,

Patty Brooks, Director of Client Programs and Services

Chapter Calendar

You can be involved with the North Central States Chapter in any number of ways: attend an educational program, apply for a grant or scholarship, or show your support at a fundraising event. For more details on these events, please call 1-800-344-4867 or visit myMSsociety.org.



Recurring Events

Date	Event	Location
Each Tues. & Thurs.	MS Exercise Class <i>Call Janet Limoges, RN at 605-217-2770 for details on this weekly wellness class.</i>	Dakota Dunes, SD
Each Tues. & Thurs.	Water 101 <i>Enjoy light water exercise designed for people with MS at Mercy's Wellness Center. Call Kate at 515-266-4475 for details.</i>	Des Moines, IA
Every 6 weeks	Neurofit Exercise Class <i>Call Tracey Hughes at 605-575-0199 for information on this exercise program.</i>	Sioux Falls, SD
Varies	Self-Help Groups <i>See pages 8, 9, and 10 to locate the group nearest you.</i>	Chapter-wide
Each Mon. & Fri.	Aquatics for MS <i>Get fit with gentle water exercises. Call Tracy Hughes at 605-575-0199 for details.</i>	Sioux Falls, SD
Every 5 weeks	Sit N Fit <i>Call Annie Young at 701-234-7916 to learn more about this exercise program for people at all levels of fitness.</i>	Fargo, ND
Every Tuesday	MS College Kids Chat <i>Join three college-aged moderators who live with MS and are also trying to juggle late nights, studying for exams, working, friendships, relationships, and their MS all at the same time. To access this chat, simply log on to msworld.org and register for a username. Once registered, chatters can enter the General Chat room and then click on "MSCollegeKids" chat every Tuesday evening from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. CST and 5:00-6:00 p.m. MST.</i>	MSworld.org

Upcoming Events: January

Date	Event	Location
Jan. 1	Society offices closed <i>Society offices will be closed in observance of the new year.</i>	Chapter-wide
Jan. 6	CogniFitness: Attention <i>Register for this free class by calling 1-800-344-4867. CogniFitness is a seven-week program to help you learn fun tools to keep your mind moving. Attend just one or all seven!</i>	Fargo, ND
Jan. 9	Makes Sense! Lunch and Learn <i>Join licensed acupuncturist Abby Miller for lunch and a discussion of how eastern medicine can help manage pain. Call 1-800-344-4867 to register.</i>	Des Moines, IA

Date	Event	Location
Jan. 12 - 16	Team Captain Week <i>Visit myMSwalk.org or myMSbike.org to sign up as a team captain and encourage your team to move forward with you toward a world free of MS.</i>	Chapter-wide
Jan. 13	Women, Money, and Power <i>Join one of the chapter's volunteers in the Ask a Financial Advisor program for this free financial planning seminar for women. The workshop will be held from 5:45-7:00 p.m. and will include hors d'oeuvres. Call Brad Brown for details at 515-440-7663.</i>	Des Moines, IA
Jan. 13	CogniFitness: Memory <i>Register for this free class by calling 1-800-344-4867. CogniFitness is a seven-week program to help you learn fun tools to keep your mind moving. Attend just one or all seven!</i>	Fargo, ND
Jan. 15	Society scholarship deadline <i>High school seniors who have MS or whose parent has MS have until today to apply for college scholarships from the National MS Society. Get the details at nationalMSsociety.org/scholarships.</i>	Chapter-wide
Jan. 19	Guy Talk <i>At 7:00 p.m. CST, call 1-800-514-2821 and enter code 565525# to join the guys for a conversation about life with MS.</i>	Teleconference
Jan. 20	CogniFitness: Executive Skills <i>Register for this free class by calling 1-800-344-4867. CogniFitness is a seven-week program to help you learn fun tools to keep your mind moving. Attend just one or all seven!</i>	Fargo, ND
Jan. 27	CogniFitness: Reasoning <i>Register for this free class by calling 1-800-344-4867. CogniFitness is a seven-week program to help you learn fun tools to keep your mind moving. Attend just one or all seven!</i>	Fargo, ND
Jan. 29	South Dakota MS Day at the Capitol <i>Be an MS activist and meet with state leaders to discuss how to create a world free of MS.</i>	Pierre, SD
Jan. 31	A Taste of Generosity <i>Reserve your seat at this annual wine gala by visiting tasteofgenerosity.org.</i>	Des Moines, IA

Upcoming Events: February

Date	Event	Location
Feb. 3	CogniFitness: Communication <i>Register for this free class by calling 1-800-344-4867. CogniFitness is a seven-week program to help you learn fun tools to keep your mind moving. Attend just one or all seven!</i>	Fargo, ND
Feb. 5	Little Black Dress for MS Luncheon and Silent Auction <i>National cycling champion Maureen Manley will share her inspirational story at this ladies' luncheon. Register online at littleblackdressforMS.org.</i>	Fargo, ND

For more upcoming programs, events, and important dates, visit myMSsociety.org.

Woman honors brother with generous donation

About twenty years ago, Julie Schweser's brother Tom Eisen was just starting his career as a reporter at KGAN-TV in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He was energetic, charismatic, and always had a joke to tell. Then, he started noticing that his legs would go numb and that he was always tired. Not long after his symptoms began, Tom was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Today, Tom uses a wheelchair to get around and sometimes loses his ability to find the right words - a talent that once came naturally to him.

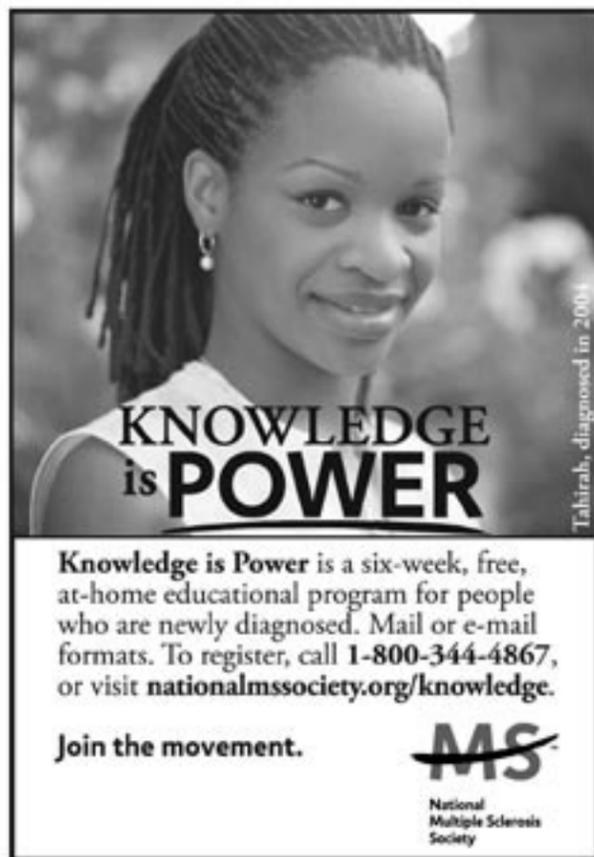


Julie and Tom on his 55th birthday.

Earlier this year, Julie and her husband, Carl, decided to give a gift that would create a world free of MS for Tom and others like him. The couple approached the Society wanting to know what it would take to build an MS Life Center, a place where people with MS could gather, offer support to one another, and - if needed - live, with a staff of qualified nurses and caregivers.

The truth is, it is going to take a lot: finding partner facilities, hiring MS certified nurses, construction costs, activities costs, and more. Though the Schweser's gift was generous, the project will be expensive and needs help from donors large and small. The chapter is dedicated to helping Julie and Carl fulfill their dream of creating a place where MS is not the defining trait of a person.

In the coming months, you will hear a lot about the MS Life Center Project in eastern Iowa. The first order of business will be to foster partnerships with local facilities and find the right location for the MS Life Center. Only then can building and program planning truly begin. Once a successful center is built and the community sees the benefit, the chapter hopes to bring the idea to other areas of the region.



KNOWLEDGE is POWER

Tahirah, diagnosed in 2004

Knowledge is Power is a six-week, free, at-home educational program for people who are newly diagnosed. Mail or e-mail formats. To register, call 1-800-344-4867, or visit nationalmssociety.org/knowledge.

Join the movement.



National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Programs and services staff added in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Since early 2007, the newest office of the North Central States Chapter has been run by just one staff member and several volunteers. Thanks to a generous gift from Julie and Carl Schweser, the chapter has been able to add a second staff member to this office. Melissa Adams is the new program manager in eastern Iowa and will be focus her time on serving people with MS and also building relationships with long-term care facilities so that Julie and Carl's dream of an MS Life Center can be achieved.

Oral MS treatment moves to trials



Investigators at sites worldwide are seeking volunteers for a clinical trial studying oral laquinimod (Teva Pharmaceuticals) in comparison with inactive placebo or interferon beta-1a (Avonex®, Biogen Idec) in 1,200 people with relapsing-remitting MS (RR MS, a course of MS characterized by clearly defined flare-ups followed by complete or partial remissions). The study is funded by Teva Neuroscience.

Multiple sclerosis occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks nerve fiber-insulating myelin and other brain and spinal cord tissues. Laquinimod is believed to affect this attack. Oral laquinimod (Teva Pharmaceutical Industries) reduced disease activity by 40.4% compared with inactive placebo in a phase 2 study of 306 people with relapsing-remitting MS. (Lancet 2008; 371: 2085-92) A phase three study of laquinimod versus inactive placebo is currently underway in 1,000 people with relapsing-remitting MS.

The primary goal of the study is to determine the effect of laquinimod on the number of relapses during the 24-month core study. Secondary goals include impacts on disease activity as observed on MRI scans and accumulation of disability.

No sites within the North Central States Chapter are currently involved with this study.



Though the studies on an oral treatment are promising, the study is not being offered in Iowa, North Dakota, or South Dakota.

Treatment update—Betaseron only

Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals launched a very thin (30-gauge) needle and a new autoinjector (BETAJECT LITE) at the end of October. The new autoinjector will replace all previous autoinjectors for Betaseron. The use of any autoinjector other than this latest version may result in people not receiving their full dose of medication. Go to betaseron.com/thinner or call 1-800-788-1467 for more information and to request the new autoinjector.

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis. Talk to your health care professional and contact the National MS Society at www.nationalmssociety.org or 1-800-344-4867 to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.

Self-Help Group Listings

The National MS Society sponsors support groups in the following areas. For more information on the groups below or if you are interested in starting a group in your area, please call 1-800-344-4867.

IOWA SELF-HELP GROUPS

Town	Date & Time	Location
Cedar Rapids	2nd Sunday of the month at 10:00 a.m.	Mercy Medical Center, Hallagan Education Center, Room 17-72, 701 10th St. SE
Chariton	3rd Monday of the month from 6:30-7:30 p.m.	Northridge Assisted Living, 1110 N. 6th St.
Creston	2nd Saturday of the month (Feb.-Oct. only) from 10:30-12:00 noon	Greater Community Hospital, 1700 Townline Rd.
Davenport	2nd Monday of the month from 2:00-3:30 p.m.	Genesis West Medical Center, Lombard Room, 1401 W. Central Park
Des Moines "Young at Heart"	The last Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 p.m.	Iowa Methodist Hospital, Kelly/Nobel Dining Rooms, Level B, 1200 Pleasant St.
Des Moines	3rd Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 p.m.	Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Conference Rooms A/B, 700 E. University Ave.
Grinnell	1st Saturday of the month from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon	Buckley Hall Bistro, 616 Broad St.
Iowa City	2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30-7:30 p.m.	Legacy Pointe, 1020 S. Scott Blvd.
Iowa City, for those in their 20s and 30s	1st Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.	Mercy Hospital, Scanlon Room, 500 E. Market
Marshalltown	1st Sunday of April, June, Aug., Oct. and Dec. from 2:00-3:30 p.m.	Marshalltown Medical Surgical Center, Room A, 3 S. 4th Ave.
Mason City	4th Sunday of the month from 2:00-3:30 p.m.	North Iowa Mercy Health Center, West Campus, Room 6, 910 N. Eisenhower Ave.
Northeast Iowa (Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Bremer, Buchanan, & Winneshiek Co.)	3rd Sunday of the month from 1:30-3:30 p.m.	Meeting place varies, call 1-800-344-4867.

Oskaloosa	The Saturday following the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00-12:00 noon	Mahaska County Hospital, Education Center, 1229 C Ave. E.
Waterloo	3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30-7:30 p.m.	Covenant Medical Center, rooms 10 and 11

NORTH DAKOTA SELF-HELP GROUPS

Bismarck/Mandan	3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.	Med. Center Outpatient Building, 414 N. 7th St., Bismarck
Bottineau	1st Wednesday of the month at 3:30 p.m.	St. Andrews Hospital, Conference Room A
Dickinson	2nd Tuesday of the month at 12:00 noon	West River Community Center, Room 2
Fargo	The last Thursday of the month at 12:00 noon	Country Kitchen Restaurant, 3201 33rd St. SW
Fargo "But You Look So Good"	1st Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.	Olivet Lutheran Church, 1330 S. University Dr.
Grand Forks/Red River Valley	2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.	North Dakota Association for those with Disabilities, 2660 S. Columbia Rd., Grand Forks
Jamestown	2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.	St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 1000 5th Ave. NE
Minot	2nd Wednesday of the month (except June-Aug.) at 7:00 p.m.	Trinity St. Joseph's Hospital

SOUTH DAKOTA SELF-HELP GROUPS

Aberdeen	2nd Saturday of the month (except June-Aug.) at 11:00 a.m.	Avera St. Luke's Education Center 709 6th Ave.
Brookings	1st Monday of the month (except June-Aug.) at 7:00 p.m.	Brookings Hospital, 300 22nd Ave.
Dakota Dunes/Sioux City	1st Saturday of the month, 1:30-3:30 p.m.	CNOS Clinic, 575 Sioux Point Rd.
Huron	Call 1-800-344-4867 for details.	Northwestern Energy, 600 Market St. W.
Mitchell	2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.	Life Light Counseling, 317 W. Havens Ave.
Pierre	Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.	Community Bible Church, 1516 N. Harrison

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Self-Help Group Profiles

The North Central States Chapter wants to connect people living with MS. Self-help groups do this by offering a meeting space every month where people can learn about new symptom management techniques, share their experiences, and find support and friendships.

One of the chapter's newest self-help groups is in Chariton, Iowa. Since beginning the group last spring, the leaders, Olive Milledge and Adeanna McCormick, have gotten a group together of about 10-12 members. Monthly meetings have brought the group closer together and have taught members more about managing their MS.

In Mitchell, South Dakota, a group, led by Klyi Cross, held an ice cream social this past fall. As a result, the participants decided to form a new self-help group in their town. All of the people who attended said they have wanted a group for several years. Everyone felt it helpful to meet with others who really understand what it is like to live with MS.



The leaders of the Chariton self-help group, Olive and Adeanna, started the group in April 2008.



An ice cream social led to the creation of a new self-help group in Mitchell, South Dakota.

Can't make it to self-help group meetings?

Get your support online by visiting myMSsociety.org. On the self help group pages, there are links to online support communities, just for local people with MS!

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SOUTH DAKOTA SELF-HELP GROUPS (cont.)

Town	Date & Time	Location
Rapid City	4th Tuesday of the month at 6:15 p.m. MST	South Dakota Cares' Daisy House, 2800 Jackson Blvd.
Sioux Falls	3rd Wednesday of the month at 2:30 p.m.	Dow Rummel Retirement Village, 1321 W. Dow Rummel St.
Sioux Falls "But You Look So Good"	3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.	Society Office, 2508 S. Carolyn Ave.
Spearfish	2nd Friday of the month (except June-Aug.) at 10:00 a.m.	St. Josephs Catholic Church Library, 844 5th St.
Watertown	The last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.	Lake Area Tech Institute, Technical Ed. Center, Room 509

Ask a Professional



Meet Brad Brown, one of the North Central States Chapter's volunteers in the Ask a Financial Advisor program, which offers financial guidance to people with MS. Brad is a Financial Advisor at UBS Financial Services, Inc. in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Learn more about how you can take advantage of the Ask a Professional program, which also features nurses and attorneys, by calling 1-800-344-4867.

Brad answered some common questions people have about their finances:

Does it make sense to transfer medical debt to a credit card?

Transferring any debt to a credit card can be risky if it is not paid in full on the next statement due date. If that can be accomplished, then I think that may be appropriate. If not, I would look for other alternatives of financing, depending on the particular individual circumstances.

Is it wise to take a loan from a 401(k) to pay off debt?

In the event that you are in a hardship situation and have no other alternative to get needed funds, then taking money from your 401k may be appropriate. However, I believe this should be a last resort and I would also recommend that you talk to your financial advisor and CPA.

Is it possible to reduce education loan payments?

Depending on the loan provider (private or federal), you may be able to qualify for some type of loan assistance. Some of the possibilities may be an extension of your loan terms, or graduated payment options or in the case of a disability you may have your loan forgiven or deferred. Call your loan provider to find out what options are available to you.

What is the number one thing a person with MS should consider when planning for the future?

Just like with any individual, we do not know when the end of our plan will occur. Therefore, with an outlook on life that is in the future, it is important to plan your life goals and have your finances work into your plan. This is best addressed by using a financial advisor who can help you put the strategies in place to pursue these financial goals.

What other advice can you give?

Do not be afraid to ask for help no matter what your financial situation. The sooner you start with a plan, the better prepared you will be for life's financial challenges.

Medical expenses and taxes

Christina Collins, CFP®, CPA/PFS, Tax Manager at LWB Financial in West Des Moines, answered this reader question:

Can medical expenses reduce my taxes?

When you prepare your individual tax return you're allowed to take either the standard deduction or itemized deductions. The standard deduction for 2007 if you were married and filed a joint return was \$10,700 and if you were single it was \$5,350 (the standard deduction is adjusted each year for inflation). If your total itemized deductions are greater than the standard deduction then you would want to take the itemized deductions.

Itemized deductions are made up of several different expenses

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a taxpayer may incur throughout the year. Some of the most common include; medical & dental expenses, real estate & personal property taxes, home mortgage interest and gifts to charity. Medical expenses are unique from the other expenses noted in that they are subject to income limitations. Only the amount of medical expenses that exceed 7.5% of your AGI (adjusted gross income) are deductible.

For example, if your adjusted gross income was \$50,000, only your medical expenses in excess of \$3,750 (\$50,000 x 7.5%) would be deductible. For most individuals, medical expenses do not exceed this threshold and no itemized deduction benefit is received. For this reason, if you have the opportunity to participate in either a flexible spending account (FSA) or health savings account (HSA) these may offer better alternatives for tax savings for medical expenses incurred and paid during the tax year. Please contact your personal CPA for additional information regarding your situation.

Neither the information nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security.

Neither UBS Financial Services Inc. nor its Financial Advisors provide you with legal or tax advice. Consult your personal legal and tax advisor about your specific situation.

Self-defense for people with disabilities workshop coming to Des Moines, Iowa this winter.

Details coming soon!



Relationship Matters

A Program for Couples Living with MS

Take charge. Get smarter. Live better.

A positive approach to MS and your relationship.
Free classes for couples:

- Communication and conflict resolution skills
- Financial planning • Career decisions
- Intimacy • Having fun together

When you know how to take charge as a couple, MS doesn't have to rule your relationship.

Contact us:
1 800 FIGHT MS (1-800-344-4867)
or couplesprogram@nmss.org

Relationship Matters when MS moves in.

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FE009002.

What you missed...

by Ashley Jarek, volunteer



On the first Friday of the month, the Des Moines office holds a lunch and learn where people with MS can come and learn about new and exciting things that will help them along the journey of living with MS.

On Friday, November 7, 2008, Hammer Medical Supplies gave a presentation on new and updated medical supplies used to assist people in everyday living tasks. Hammer Medical Supplies is a locally-owned medical supply store that is family-owned and operated in eight cities in Iowa. They specialize in mobility, respiratory services, home accessibility, and personal care items.

Some of the products demonstrated included updated wheelchairs that can be adjusted to assist with rehabilitation and transportable wheelchairs that can be easily disassembled to fit in the trunk of a car. Walkers and canes were presented for people at different stages. Some of the supportive supplies include calf braces, compression socks, and a "home handy" kit that included a long shoehorn, grabbers of various lengths, and shower sponges. Home modifications were also introduced that included elevators, escalators, and lift systems that can be installed in the home.

Did you know?

Most insurance companies will replace wheel chairs or power-chairs every five years. Also, they will replace the battery once a year, however batteries generally last two to three years. ****Make sure to check with your insurance provider for their rules and regulations****

Book Review of Alternative Medicine and Multiple Sclerosis by Allen Bowling, M.D., Ph.D.

by Laura Petersen, volunteer

It was not so long ago that the phrase "alternative medicine" received the same reaction as a four-letter word. But lately, alternative therapy has become more common - and there is research to back it up. Still, many patients of conventional medicine will hesitate to trust any method not endorsed by a doctor. As an M.D. and Ph.D., Allen Bowling was skeptical about experimenting with alternative medicine, but when patients began inquiring, he decided to educate himself.

Bowling's book breaks down alternative and complimentary (the simultaneous use of conventional and alternative medicine methods) therapies into easy-to-understand categories specifically designed to educate people with MS. Each chapter is dedicated to describing a method as well as providing information on the benefits and dangers, any relevant and respected research, and the estimated costs of trying it. Bowling takes a very objective and safe approach to describing the therapies and how they might help to alleviate some of the core symptoms of MS.

If you'd ever been curious about alternative medicine, try picking up Bowling's book and educate yourself! This book and many others are available for free check out through the chapter's lending library. Order books online at myMSsociety.org.

Lead the movement at walk MS

It just takes one person to inspire hundreds. That's the power behind being a team captain at Walk MS.

Now is the time to gather people and form a team for Walk MS.

- Why walk alone when you can form a team with just a few people? Four to be exact. Invite coworkers, church members, and neighbors to join your team.
- Why walk alone when you can inspire others to join you in the movement toward a world free of MS? Isn't that what we all want? Chances are, the people you invite to be on your team know someone living with MS. If not, tell them why you joined the movement. Stories are a powerful way to encourage others.



Walk MS raises hundreds of thousands of dollars in the North Central States Chapter, which the Society uses to fund research and local programs and services.

Perks to having a team:

- Recognition and awards at Walk MS for top fundraisers and teams
- Team photos before the start of the event
- VIP team tent
- Fun contests and prizes
- Top 10 teams listed in the Footnotes newsletter, MSConnections, and on the website
- Special incentives during Team Weeks



Team Morgan

Meet a team captain

2009 will mark the fourth year that Pam Morgan and Susan Smith, co-captains of Team Morgan, will lead their team at Walk MS: Sioux Falls. Last year, Pam joined the Walk MS planning committee and continues to plan and organize different fundraisers to ensure her team is one of the top fundraising teams in the chapter. Last year, the team raised \$10,000 to earn the Diamond Award. Since the team formed, Team Morgan has raised \$XXXX to help support MS programs, services, and research. Pam was also nominated and recognized as a Walk MS Honoree. Susan Smith, who nominated Pam, wrote, "Pam has taken everything in stride and has maintained a great attitude." Thanks, Pam, for leading your team to join the movement!

Behind the scenes

We cannot host Walk MS without the wonderful volunteers that help at registration or at the finish line. Whether you, your coworkers, or your service group are willing to help out the day of the event they are a variety of things to help with: decorating and set-up, marking or helping along the route, checking in walkers, cheering in the walkers, taking down the route. We are looking for volunteers to help out for a few hours or for the day. If you are interested, please contact your local office at 800-344-4867.

REGISTER OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION



Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I would like to register for:

- The **Make a Connection Peer Mentor Program** (free registration).
- Knowledge is Power** (free registration). Please send me educational packets via:
 - Email
 - Postal Mail
- Relationships Matters** (free registration).
- My local **Government Relations Committee (GRC)**. Please send me more information about being an MS activist.
- The new **CogniFitness program** in Fargo, North Dakota.
- MS Day at the South Dakota State Capitol** on January 29, 2009.
- A Taste of Generosity** in Des Moines, Iowa on January 31, 2009. I have enclosed my check for \$_____ and would like to reserve _____ seats (one ticket is \$100, or you may buy a table for eight for \$750).
- The **Little Black Dress for MS Luncheon and Silent Auction** on February 5, 2009 in Fargo, North Dakota. I have enclosed my check for \$_____ and would like to reserve _____ seats (one ticket is \$35, or you may buy a table for eight for \$325).
- The **Little Black Dress for MS Champagne Luncheon and Fashion Show** on February 6, 2009 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I have enclosed my check for \$_____ and would like to reserve _____ seats (one ticket is \$35, or you may buy a table for eight for \$325).
- MS Day at the Iowa State Capitol** on March 4, 2009.
- My local **Walk MS** event. Contact me with information about starting a team, too, because I want to be a leader in the MS movement.
- My Life, My MS, My Decisions**

Please contact me with additional information about:

- Self-help groups
- Financial Assistance
- Guy Talk
- Real Talk. Real Answers.
- Ask a Professional
- Lending Library
- The Public Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., March 9-11, 2009
- How I can get involved with fundraising
- Wellness Programs in my area
- How I can support the MS Life Center
- Self-defense classes in Des Moines
- Depression and MS



Please return completed form to:

National MS Society
2508 S. Carolyn Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57106