

## MS Research

### Global MS Prevention Initiative Update

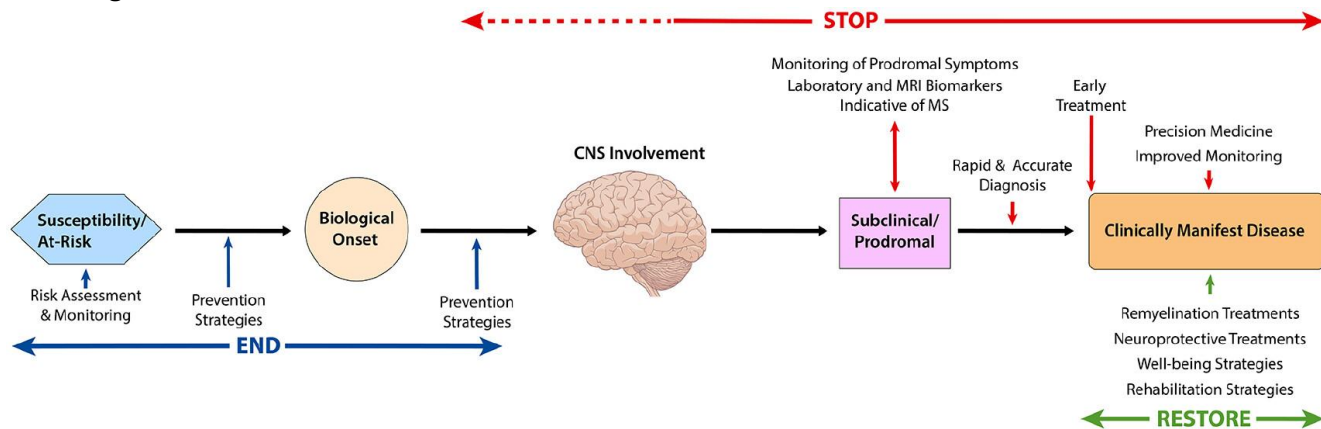
MS Canada, in partnership with MS Australia, will lead a new international effort for the prevention and ultra-early detection of MS. An inaugural workshop was held on April 22-25 in Lisbon, Portugal, bringing together over 50 participants from around the world, including researchers, clinicians, policymakers and people affected by MS.

The goal of the workshop was to convene thought leaders in prevention to build a roadmap that will inform global research investments targeting MS prevention. The scientific roadmap will be communicated in a scientific publication by late 2025, which will be used to guide the research community and MS patient advisory groups in driving momentum in MS prevention.

**MS Canada News Release** (April 23, 2025) - [Global Multiple Sclerosis Prevention Initiative Underway | MS Canada \(French\)](#)

**MS Canada News Release** (November 3, 2024) - [HIGHLIGHT: Refined Pathways to Cures Research Roadmap for MS | MS Canada \(French\)](#)

**Summary:** A new iteration of the [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#) outlines current research priorities with the greatest potential to stop MS, restore function and repair damage, and end MS through prevention. The updated Roadmap takes into account new scientific advances in MS and provides recommendations to accelerate the development of MS cures through coordinated global efforts. This Roadmap is endorsed by MS organizations worldwide, including MS Canada.



**Figure 1.** Opportunities for Pathways to Cures Interventions.

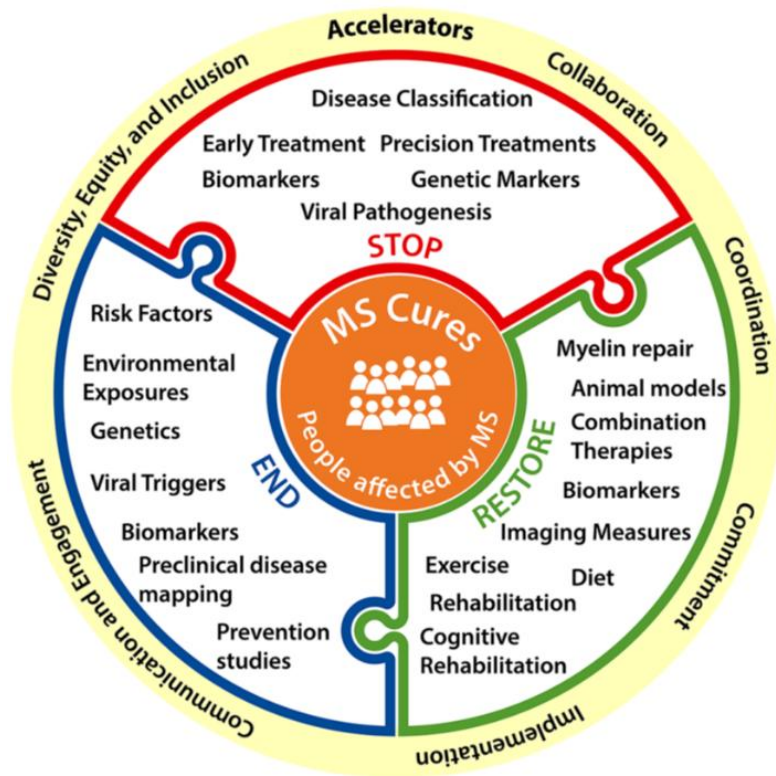


Figure 2. Recommendations for accelerating Pathways to Cures.

**MS Canada News Release** (September 27, 2024) - [Findings From the First Global Landscape Analysis of MS Research Funding](#)

A [Global Landscape Analysis](#) was conducted to better understand the type of MS research funded by governments and MS advocacy organizations worldwide, including MS Canada. The study identified over 2,300 MS research projects between 2021-2023 valued at nearly 1.5 billion euros. The majority of funding was allocated to projects belonging to the Pathways to Cures Stop pathway, followed by Restore, then End. This assessment is the first step toward understanding how the global community invests in MS research and to identify key areas of focus to optimize impact and speed progress.

### EBV-targeting vaccines and antivirals

- A 2022 Harvard University study provided the strongest evidence to date showing the association with Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infection and the onset of MS. Following an analysis of blood samples and clinical data from 10 million young adults in the US military spanning 20 years, the researchers found that almost all MS cases were infected with EBV prior to MS onset. EBV infection increased risk of MS by 32-fold. The study suggests that EBV acts as an initial trigger or pre-condition required for MS onset. While EBV is likely necessary, it is not sufficient to trigger MS, and it is believed other factors are needed.
- No approved EBV vaccine exists yet, but multiple candidates are in early-phase clinical trials.

- EBV is linked to infectious mononucleosis, several cancers (e.g., Hodgkin lymphoma, nasopharyngeal carcinoma), and autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis (MS).
  - Vaccine development is challenging due to EBV's complex life cycle (lytic and latent phases) and immune evasion strategies.
  - Candidates include: mRNA-based Vaccines (Moderna), Nanoparticle Vaccine (ModeX Therapeutics / Merck), Protein Subunit Vaccines (NIAID/NIH), and Antigen targets.
  - While no EBV-specific antivirals are currently approved, several strategies for MS are being explored including Repurposed Antivirals (e.g. Famciclovir), Immunotherapies, and CNS-Penetrant antivirals.
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### **The US Department of Defense's MS Research Program (MSRP) and Current Context**

- Congress established the MSRP in 2009 to address the higher incidence of MS in military service members and veterans, with nearly 70,000 veterans affected. An MS diagnosis for active-duty military usually results in a medical discharge, directly affecting military readiness and capabilities. MS is a presumptive condition, which means it is presumed to be connected to military service if someone is diagnosed within seven years of an honorable discharge.
- Since the MSRP began, over 150,000 additional Department of Defense beneficiaries have been diagnosed.
- The MSRP funds high-impact research that addresses urgent gaps and can make a real difference for people living with MS. Through fiscal year 2024, the MSRP received a total of \$153.3 million in congressional appropriations and funded 208 awards. These investments led to 395 publications, 102 follow-on grants, four patents and an additional three patent applications, and 13 clinical trials.
- On Tuesday, March 18, the [National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#) learned the Multiple Sclerosis Research Program ([MSRP](#)) has been unfunded for fiscal year 2025, the first in its history.
  - Congress enacted a full-year continuing appropriations bill that cut overall Department of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) funding by ~57% (to \$650M) and omitted the stand-alone Multiple Sclerosis Research Program (MSRP) from the funded list—leaving MSRP at \$0 in FY2025.

## Income Security

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### Issue with Bill C-4 - An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure

The issue is with the reduction of the personal income tax rate from 15 per cent to 14 per cent over two years, which will diminish two critical supports for individuals and families with disabilities: the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and the Medical Expense Tax Credit (METC). The unintended consequence of this reduction means an adult with a valid DTC certificate who currently receives \$1,480 in federal disability tax credits will see this drop to \$1,382 by 2026, a loss of nearly \$100. MS Canada, along with many other disability organizations, wrote to the Minister of Finance before the legislation was put forward, urging them to amend the current legislation to ensure these credits remain at current levels regardless of basic rate changes. This is still outstanding.

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### Federal Government Red Tape Review

The federal government launched the Red Tape Review in July 2025 to eliminate outdated and burdensome regulations that hinder economic growth. Progress reports highlight efforts to streamline processes, modernize tools, and improve service delivery, led by the Treasury Board Secretariat.

- **Canada Disability Benefit:** The review simplified the benefit's application process to reduce barriers for persons with disabilities. For example, a data-sharing agreement with the Canada Revenue Agency allowed eligible individuals with a valid Disability Tax Credit to receive a personalized invitation to apply, helping to speed up processing. *Barrier: Eligibility for the CDB still requires a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate (with its known issues for the MS community).*
  - **Canada Pension Plan (CPP) - "Tell Us Once" Approach:** Efforts are underway to allow information sharing across programs so applicants don't have to repeatedly provide the same details. **Canada Pension Plan Disability - CPP-D** - ESDC is proposing to streamline its medical report and leverage data-sharing agreements to reduce paperwork and improve application efficiency.
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## MS Canada Partnerships

### Disability Without Poverty (DWP)

DWP is a Canadian grassroots, non-partisan advocacy organization led by people with disabilities. Its mission is to eliminate poverty among disabled Canadians by mobilizing community power, influencing government policy, and securing public support. The #BetterTheBenefit campaign's focus includes advocating to:

- increase the amount of the benefit
- automatic enrollment for people already receiving provincial or federal disability supports, to reduce bureaucratic barriers.
- Press for action on the \$243 million over six years which was allocated in Budget 2024 to offset the cost of Disability Tax Credit (DTC) medical forms — funds that have yet to roll out.
- call for the outstanding technical amendment to the Income Tax Act to ensure the CDB is fully income-exempt

**Fund the Benefit Coalition**

The Fund the Benefit Coalition in Canada is a national advocacy initiative focused on ensuring the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) is adequately funded, accessible, and effective in lifting Canadians with disabilities out of poverty. It includes over 40 organizations, (including MS Canada) and is led by the Daily Bread Food Bank, and supported by disability rights advocates across the country. The group’s advocating to:

- Increase the benefit amount to bring recipients above the poverty line (the current amount is up to a max of \$200/month, which is inadequate).
- Expand eligibility criteria to include more people with disabilities, especially those who may not qualify for the Disability Tax Credit. (Expand the eligibility criteria to align with the Accessible Canada Act’s definition of disability, removing the requirement for a Disability Tax Credit certificate and allowing individuals receiving provincial, territorial, or federal disability benefits to access the CDB.)
- Prevent clawbacks from other federal, provincial, or private benefits.
- Base eligibility on individual income, not household income, to protect against financial dependence or abuse.

**Additional MS Canada Priorities**

<p><b>MS Treatment and Care</b> Boost MS Specialist Care</p>	<p><b>ASK:</b> Invest in funding MS specialist care through federal-provincial health funding agreements to improve timely access to diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.</p>
<p><b>Employment Security</b> Make Work... Work</p>	<p><b>ASK:</b> Continue modernizing the EI sickness benefit by reducing the hours needed for eligibility from 600 to 400.</p>
<p><b>MS Care and Housing</b> Invest in Comprehensive, Appropriate, and High-Quality Home Care and Housing</p>	<p><b>ASK:</b> Ensure federal funding investments include comprehensive and high-quality home care for people with long-term chronic conditions such as MS and a range of appropriate housing and care options that focus on diversity and choice.</p>