

**GRIFFITH
GROUP**

EXECUTIVE SEARCH



Candidate Brief

Vice-President, Research & Scientific Engagement

MS Canada

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About MS Canada

MS Canada is guided on the journey to end MS through discoveries, innovation and collective action. This strategy connects the MS community through its common goal of a world free of MS. Together, the organization works to advance treatment and care, enhance well-being, understand, and halt disease progression and ultimately prevent MS from happening in the first place. Working with researchers, donors, partners, volunteers, and people living with the disease, MS Canada is striving to improve the lives of Canadians today through supporting high-quality research that aims to end MS tomorrow. Through generous contributions from donors, corporate sponsors, and fervent fundraisers, MS Canada has invested over \$218 million dollars in research since its inception in 1948. To learn more about MS Canada and its impact, please visit www.mscanada.ca.

Mission & Values

With its sights firmly set on a world free of MS, MS Canada's mission is to connect and empower the MS community to create positive change.

The MS community is vibrant and diverse and includes people living with MS, families, friends, volunteers, donors, researchers, clinicians, and many others. By harnessing its energies people affected by MS will have the systems and support needed to live rich and full lives. It also makes sure that researchers have the resources to continue learning about the disease and improve treatment and care.

MS Canada's efforts are guided by five core values. It aims to be:

- Impact-driven. We make a difference.
- Collaborative. We work together.
- Compassionate. We help.
- Bold. We think big.
- Resilient. We don't give up.

To learn more about MS Canada and its impact, please visit www.mscanada.ca.

What is MS?

Canada has one of the [highest rates](#) of multiple sclerosis (MS) in the world, with an [estimated 90,000 Canadians living with the disease](#). On average, 12 Canadians are diagnosed with MS every day. MS is a neurological disease of the central nervous system which includes the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. While the exact cause of MS is unknown, it is believed to be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Each individual with MS has a unique disease course that can vary widely in severity, symptoms, progression rate, and response to treatment.

The disease attacks myelin, the protective covering of the nerves, causing inflammation and often damaging the myelin. Myelin is needed to effectively send messages to and from the brain. Damage to the myelin can result in loss of nerve fibres and over time these changes contribute to disease progression. MS is unpredictable and may cause [symptoms](#) such as fatigue, lack of coordination, weakness, tingling, impaired sensation, vision problems, bladder and bowel problems, and cognitive and mood changes. Its effects can be physical, emotional and financial.

Currently there is no cure, but researchers in Canada and around the world are focusing on research areas with the greatest potential to stop MS, restore function and repair damage from the disease, and end MS through prevention.

To learn more about the disease, please visit: <https://mscanada.ca/intro-to-ms/what-is-multiple-sclerosis>

Diagnosis

Anyone can be diagnosed with MS, but women are up to 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with MS than men. 60% of adults diagnosed with MS are between the ages of 20 and 49 years old. While it is most often diagnosed in adults aged 20 to 49, younger children and older adults are also diagnosed with the disease. MS occurs in most ethnic groups although risk varies by age, ancestry, and region.

To learn about resources for people living with MS and their families, please visit:

<https://mscanada.ca/find-support-multiple-sclerosis>

MS Canada's Strategic Plan: *Discover. Innovate. Act.*

As leaders within the MS community, MS Canada is privileged to be a part of a determined group of change agents who are working tirelessly to create a world free of MS. Needless to say, there is an urgency to this work. For every day that passes, more Canadians receive the news that they have MS.

Since 1948, the MS Canada has been proud to be a part of a community of people living with MS, families, friends, volunteers, donors, researchers, clinicians, and many more in funding research, providing support to people affected by MS, and advocating for supports and systems that allow people living with MS to live a full and inclusive life. In 2019, MS Canada unveiled a strategic plan that not only builds upon the work of the entire MS community since 1948, but with great hope, brings a new chapter to move forward its mission of connecting and empowering the MS community to create positive change that helps realize its vision of a world free of MS.

Through discoveries, innovation, and collective action, MS Canada works with the MS community to alleviate the uncertainty that MS causes, help provide accessible options for disease management and reach out to partners to eliminate physical and social barriers in communities.

MS Canada's strategic plan not only lays out the roadmap in this journey to create a world free of MS, but also to provide inspiration for all in the MS community to connect and collaborate in order to advance treatment and care, enhance well-being, understand and halt disease progression, and prevent MS from happening.

To read MS Canada's strategic plan, please visit: <https://mscanada.ca/strategic-plan>

MS Canada Research

Canada remains at the forefront of MS research around the world. Through generous contributions from donors, corporate sponsors, and fervent fundraisers, MS Canada has **invested over \$218 million** in research since its inception in 1948. This investment has led to significant results for people affected by MS. More specifically, MS Canada funded studies have gone the distance in areas such as imaging, diagnosis, genetics, tissue repair, rehabilitation, and disease-modifying therapies. With each passing year research continues to reveal new knowledge around the cause of MS, as well as the mechanism by which MS impacts the central nervous system.

Although much progress has been made, many questions regarding MS remain unanswered. As a result, Canadian researchers with diverse scientific backgrounds and expertise are turning their attention to MS and working together to uncover important knowledge and develop treatments that will effectively manage symptoms and slow progression. To ensure that momentum in MS research continues, MS Canada administers an annual research competition that provides support for researchers whether they are in the early stages of graduate school or conducting research as an independent investigator. Funding researchers across the academic and clinical spectrum enables education and training for the next generation of MS leaders, while reinforcing their passion for the field. In addition to supporting research, MS Canada engages young researchers in education and training programs, mentorship initiatives, and networking opportunities which aim to stimulate interest in MS research and encourage collaboration amongst the future generation of MS experts.

The overarching goal of MS Canada is to invest in research that will provide the greatest benefit to individuals who are deeply affected by MS. Each year the organization is hopeful that its commitment to research will bring the MS community one step closer to finding a cure for this complex and often unpredictable disease.

To read about MS Canada's latest research, please visit: <https://mscanada.ca/latest-research>

Research Funding

Each year MS Canada funds approximately \$6-\$10 million in research to support studies

that investigate all aspects of MS both biological and clinical. MS Canada also supports research and training programs which cultivates a network of bright young minds and engages them in activities that fine-tune their skills and knowledge in MS research. To read more about, MS Canada's research funding, please visit:

<https://mscanada.ca/research-studies-we-fund>

The Opportunity

Reporting to the Senior Vice-President, Mission, Benjamin Davis, the Vice-President Research & Scientific Engagement (“VPRSE”) oversees a broad national and global portfolio supporting MS Canada’s research enterprise, knowledge mobilization, and mission. This position contributes thought leadership to a host of global initiatives, including the International Progressive MS Alliance, Global MS Research strategy group (Pathways to Cures) and a developing MS prevention initiative. Working with a dedicated team, across the organization and with external experts, the VPRSE oversees the research strategies, priorities and goals, the granting process, conferences and knowledge translation, and manages the day-to-day operations and activities of the research team. As a key member of the executive leadership team, the VPRSE provides leadership to strategies and plans for the organization. VPRSE sits on multiple scientific committees, serving as both the spokesperson for the organization's research agenda and as a conveyor of those working to support MS Canada’s goals and vision. As a key member of the executive leadership team, the VPRSE will set priorities and strategies for MS Canada research decisions and be the voice and advocate for ensuring the inclusion of patient voices in advancing the research agenda.

Key Areas of Impact:

- Develops and leads the strategy and implementation of the research agenda in alignment with MS Canada’s impact goals.
- Establishes and manages complex research-related relationships with a wide range of constituents including key partners in industry, research, healthcare practitioners and clinicians, international MS Community, donors and legal relationships to maximize research investments and impact.
- Translates and disseminates relevant research information via various communication channels to the broad MS Community and to support donor engagement.
- Monitors the broader research landscape, identifies gaps and opportunities to include in the research strategy.
- Provides key strategic leadership in supporting MS Canada and MS Australia to lead global collaborative research efforts towards prevention of MS.

- Advances research and prevention priorities through effective communication channels, with diverse audiences, which includes ensuring the patient voice is included.
- Provides expertise and contributions to donor cultivation, engagement and impact initiatives.
- Works collaboratively across the organization and provides leadership and development to the team.

The Individual

As MS Canada is a research-intensive health charity, its senior leaders must have exceptional profiles and the capability to earn the credibility and trust of their peers. To that end, as the ideal candidate, you are a respected executive and scientific researcher with an exemplary track record of scholarship, service, and senior leadership experience to lead this team and its responsibility for promoting research on a national and global scale. Candidates must hold an earned doctorate (PhD) from a recognized university in a relevant field and the ability and interest to lead the research and scientific engagement activities in a complex, national and global research-intensive health charity. Your communications skills are exceptional, and you are at ease discussing complex scientific issues scientific researchers and clinicians, and to the broader MS community in lay language. Colleagues refer to you as collaborative, responsive, thoughtful and a team builder and mentor, with a deep commitment to supporting Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA). The ability and flexibility to travel nationally and globally is required.

While the Search Committee recognizes that it is unlikely that any one individual will possess all the desired qualifications in equal measure, in addition to the above, the ideal candidate should have the following:

Key Competencies

- **Collaboration** - Works well with constituents in a cooperative and supportive manner to achieve shared goals. Values and encourages diverse perspectives to achieve impact. Coaches others and builds bridges between constituents for organizational impact.
- **Embracing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility** - Contributes to an environment in which everyone feels valued, empowered to participate freely, and a sense of belonging. Educates and drives accountability for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Accessibility in the organization.
- **Innovation** - Thinks beyond the confines of traditional ways of doing things to recognize opportunities and find new and better approaches. Encourages experimentation and accepting failure as a driver of innovation. Thinks beyond the

confines of traditional ways of doing things to recognize opportunities and find new and better approaches. Encourages experimentation and accepting failure as a driver of innovation.

- **Experience-Focused** - Keeps constituents top of mind while providing an exceptional experience. Coaches others and ensures an excellent constituent experience.
- **People Leadership** - Coaches, motivates, and empowers people to support employee experience, employee impact, and organizational impact. Inspires team members and demonstrates accountability for strategic leadership goals and plans.
- **Strategic Leadership and Execution** - Applies vision to think beyond the immediate situation and explores multiple potential paths. Invests time in planning, discovery, and reflection to better drive decisions and more efficient implementation. Ensures that impact goals are met by executing, monitoring, and adjusting the organizational strategic framework.
- **Organizational Awareness** - Contributes to the organization by understanding and aligning actions with the organization's goals, core functions, needs, and values. Provides strategic guidance and contributes to setting the organization's goals, functions, and values.
- **Relationship Building** - Develops trusting professional relationships with constituents. Purposefully develops networks to collaborate and achieve impact. Promotes relationship building and leads strategic network development.:
- **Communications** - Effectively and appropriately interacts with others to build relationships, influence others, and facilitates the sharing of ideas and information. Champions and coaches others on effective and healthy communication, trust, and influence.
- **Organizational Impact Analysis** - Collects and analyzes internal and external data in order to achieve the organization's value proposition and maximize impact while minimizing risk. Develops systems that promote impactful decision making.
- **Financial Budgeting, Planning and Reporting** - Provides advice and services on financial planning, budgeting, reporting and financial coding to ensure the optimal allocation of financial resources to organizational objectives. Models excellence and advises others on financial budgeting, planning, and reporting.

To Apply

To learn more about this impactful leadership opportunity with MS Canada, please submit a comprehensive resume along with a cover letter in confidence to Jane Griffith (jane@griffithgroup.ca) and/or Caroline McLean (caroline@griffithgroup.ca), or visit: <https://griffithgroup.ca/mscanada-vprse/>.

MS Canada welcomes and encourages applications from all qualified individuals, including Canadians living abroad who are moving back to Canada. MS Canada is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace and encourages applications from all qualified candidates who represent the diversity present across Canada.

MS Canada and Griffith Group are committed to an inclusive, accessible and welcoming hiring process that provides reasonable accommodation to all applicants. Please advise Jane Griffith (jane@griffithgroup.ca) should you require any accommodation to participate in the recruitment and/or assessment processes.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, priority will be given to those legally eligible to work in Canada.

Appendix A – Dr. Pamela Valentine

Dr. Pamela Valentine joined MS Canada in 2018 with the drive and passion to lead the team of volunteers and staff in their work to accelerate research for better treatments and care, advocate for policy and system changes, and work towards improving lives for people living with MS.

Pam led the development of a new strategic plan – *Discover. Innovate. Act.* -- in collaboration with hundreds of constituents from across the country, including people living with and affected by MS, members of the scientific community, volunteers, staff, and donors. Alongside other change agents within the MS community, she is leading the implementation of the strategy to accomplish the ambitious goals of advancing treatment and care, enhancing well-being, understanding and halting disease progression, and preventing MS.



A trained neuroscientist, Pam came to MS Canada from Alberta Innovates where she spent over a decade and a half leading innovation and change. Her leadership at Alberta Innovates included significantly growing the health research portfolio and strengthening integration of research and health systems to maximize impact for patients and providers. She also led the establishment of a new Alberta Innovates organization that consolidated four corporations across the health, energy, agriculture, and forestry sectors. Pam started her career as a faculty member at the University of Calgary at Hotchkiss Brain Institute and then moved to Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research where she held a number of leadership roles.

Hailing from Calgary, Alberta, Pam is a published researcher and has been awarded Hotchkiss Brain Institute Alumni of the Year, Canadian Psychological Association of Excellence, and the Neuroscience Canada Foundation Award. Pam believes in achieving impact in the health domain, a passion she developed as a basic scientist with a strong desire to facilitate translation between basic research and clinical care.

Pam is a strong advocate with an appetite for community involvement and currently serves as a board of trustee member for the MS International Federation; an executive committee member of the International Progressive MS Alliance; an executive committee member of Patient Reported Outcomes Initiative for MS (PROMS); a member of the Canada Post Accessibility Advisory Panel; a member of the Strategic Advisory Committee, Ontario Strategy for Patient Oriented Research (SPOR) Support Unit; a scientific advisory board member for SPOR Evidence Alliance; and a member of the Health Charities Coalition of Canada.

Appendix B – Benjamin Davis

Benjamin Davis is MS Canada's Senior Vice-President of Mission. Ben is proud to have held senior positions in the charitable Sector for the past 20 years. He is deeply motivated to help others and is passionate about leadership that encourages staff and volunteers to change lives for people living with disabilities. Ben is highly connected with people living with MS and is motivated every day by their courage and resiliency. It's with them in mind that he chooses to advocate, and work to make a positive impact in the lives of our community.



A proud Maritimer who grew up on one of the many beautiful coasts of Nova Scotia, Ben has a Bachelor Degree in Kinesiology from the University of New Brunswick and a Master of Human Kinetics from the University of Windsor. An avid sports fan, you will always find Ben and his two boys cheering hard for Canada's soccer, sailing and basketball teams.

Appendix C - Org Chart

Organization Chart

