2025 IMPACT REPORT

Connected by MS, Fueled by Innovation

MS Canada

Contents

"When I think of the future of MS, I'm hopeful. I'm hopeful because people who are diagnosed today have more opportunities for a normal life than I did when I was diagnosed over 20 years ago. I'm hopeful because of everything we're learning through MS research."

Marilyn, lives with MS

Strategic Plan

We work alongside our MS community, leveraging discoveries, innovation, and the strength of collective action to alleviate the uncertainty that MS can bring. We help provide accessible options for disease management, and advocate to remove barriers and improve the well-being of all Canadians living with MS, ultimately bringing us closer to our vision of a world free of MS.

Our Mission

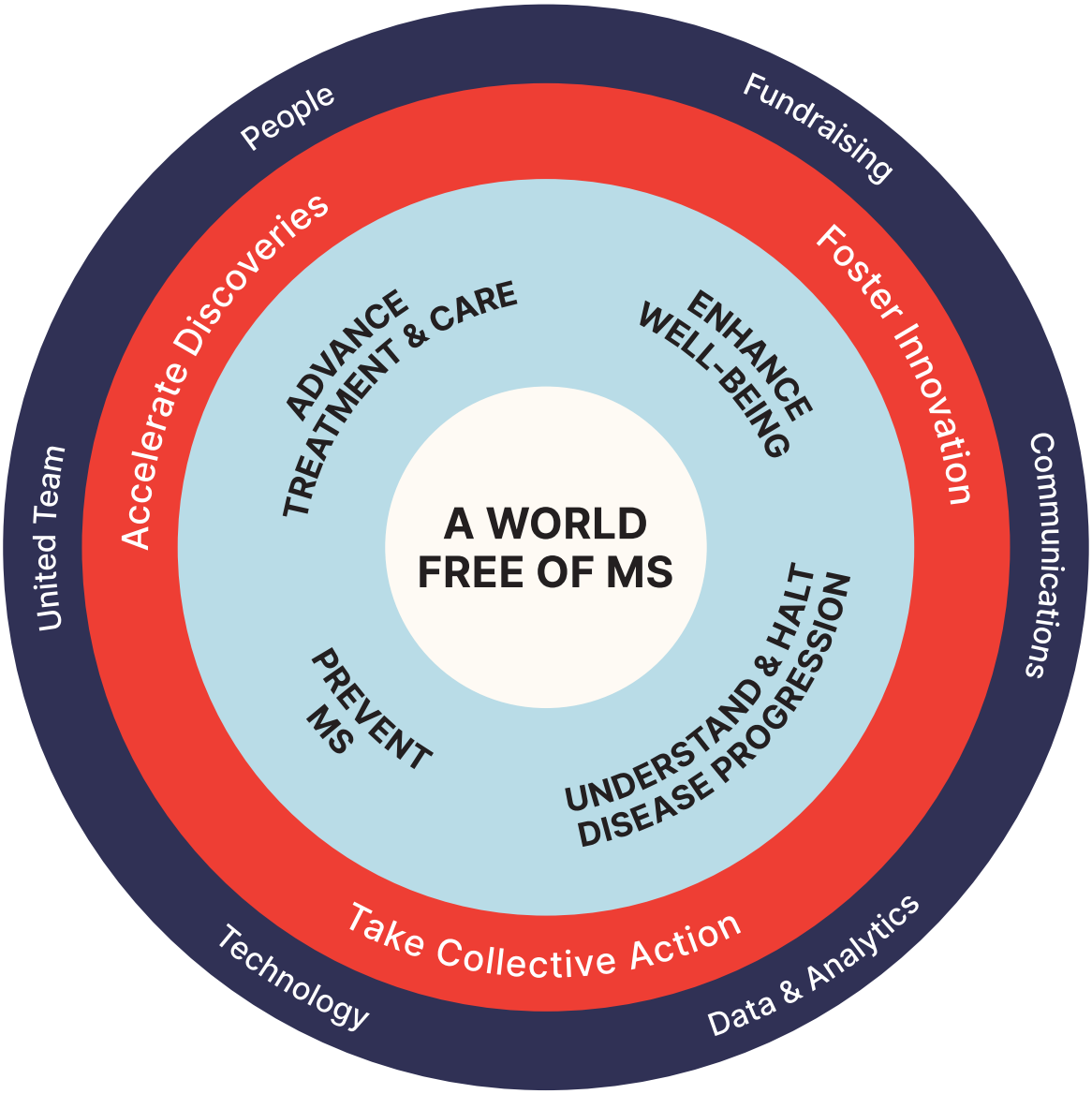
To connect and empower the MS community to create positive change

Our Vision

A world free of MS

Our Values

- Impact-Driven
- Collaborative
- Compassionate
- Bold
- Resilient



Our Impact Goals

Advance Treatment and Care

Having a variety of effective treatment and care options for symptom management, wellness, and self care will help people on their unique MS journey.

Enhance Well-Being

Removing physical and social barriers within communities will ensure access to opportunities and supports for people affected by MS.

Understand and Halt Disease Progression

Understanding the complexities of MS progression will stop MS in its tracks.

Prevent MS

Stopping MS before it starts will reduce the number of people who develop the disease.

Message from the CEO and Chair

Every two hours, someone in Canada is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). That means that every single day, approximately 12 lives change drastically, carrying a new weight of uncertainty. Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world, and with that comes a tremendous responsibility to continuously search for answers, treatments, and solutions – **a responsibility we do not take lightly.** Our four impact goals drive every decision we make. We work to Advance Treatment and Care, Enhance Well-being, Understand and Halt Disease Progression, and Prevent MS.

For nearly eight decades, MS Canada has transformed the lives of Canadians affected by MS. **We are driving innovation in research that is changing how the world understands and treats the disease.** Today, we know that when it comes to MS, time matters, and the pace of progress has never been greater. In the last decade alone, breakthroughs in understanding how MS works have fundamentally reshaped treatment and care. Clinicians can now rely on biomarkers and advanced imaging to diagnose MS faster and with more accuracy, allowing for earlier treatment and improved long-term outcomes. We are moving closer to a treatment paradigm that is centred on precision medicine, where MS clinicians can **tailor their care to each person's unique disease course.**

We are leading the way in MS prevention research, building a global alliance of MS organizations exploring how to detect MS early, stop it before it causes damage, and advance discoveries that can one day lead us to a world free of MS. This groundbreaking collaboration is uniting experts around the world to understand not only how MS develops, but **how to stop it from progressing further and before it starts.**

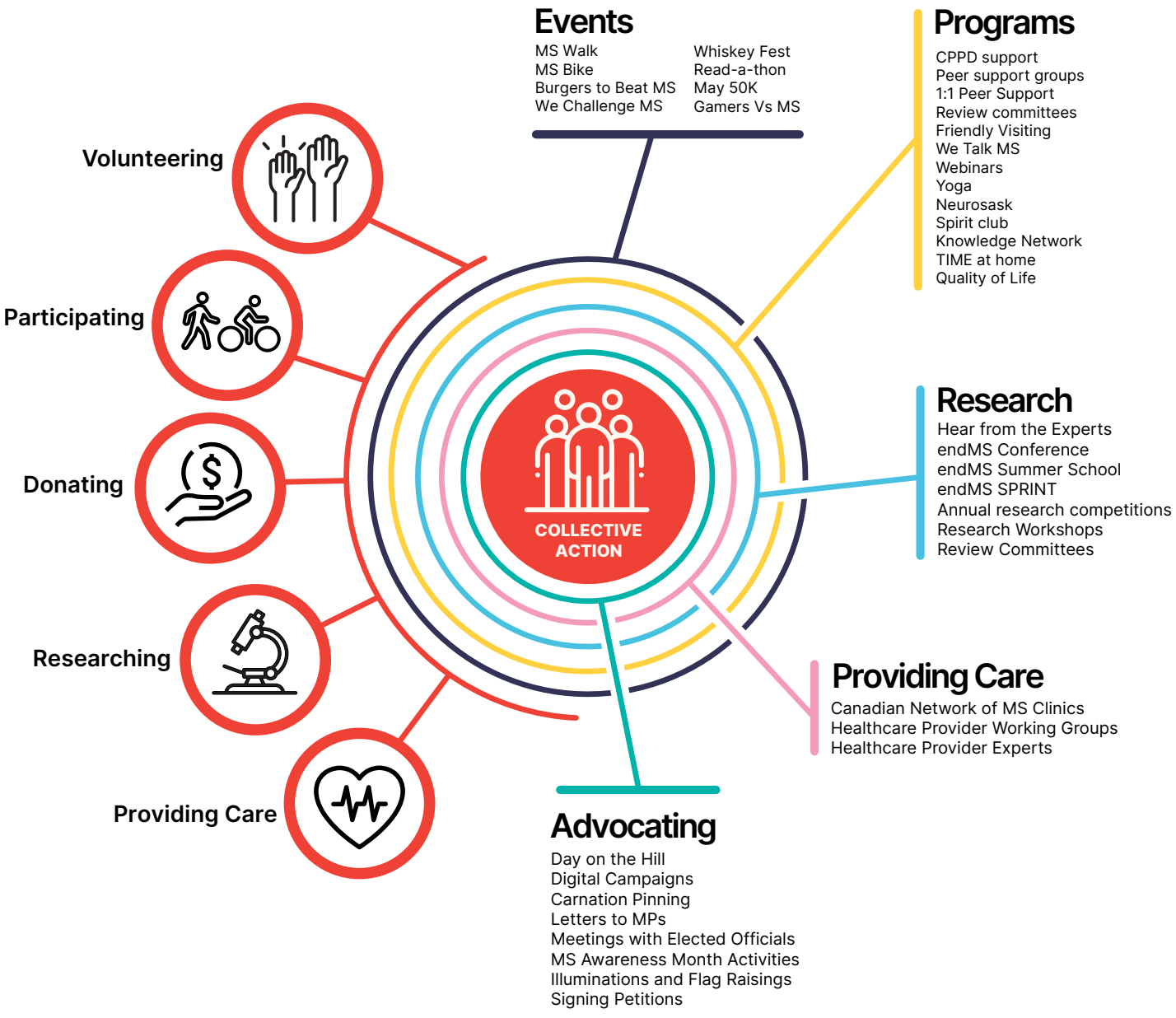
The progress we have seen over the past decades is a direct result of our MS community's unwavering dedication to a world free of MS. This resilient and dynamic community shares lived experience, drives policy change, and builds powerful networks of connection that raise awareness and offer incredible support. **Together, we are paving the way toward a brighter future for all people affected by MS.**

Dr. Pamela Valentine
President and CEO,
MS Canada

John Clifford
Board Chair, MS Canada

The MS Community in Canada

This year, **our MS community continued to show up in powerful and meaningful ways**, giving their time, contributing resources, and raising awareness however they could. Together, we turn every action into real momentum that pushes us closer to our shared vision of a world without MS.



This year:

You volunteered an equivalent of **over 2 years of time** to support the MS community.

You dedicated **more than 7,729 hours walking**, and **biked over 297,000 kilometers** to end MS.

You brought together **3185 people to challenge MS** by turning their hobbies and passions into extraordinary actions.

Through Burgers to Beat MS, **215 staff and volunteers** visited **412 A&W restaurants**, raising more than **1.73 million dollars.**

Burgers to Beat MS has been around for the past 17 years, raising **over 23 million dollars** that have helped fund wellness and support programs, advocacy efforts in income and employment security, MS treatments, MS care and housing, and critical MS research.

All of these meaningful actions amount to real change. In 2025, you helped us raise a total of $42.6 million dollars, which has fostered opportunities for connection within our MS community, helped remove barriers to access for Canadians affected by MS, and catalyzed innovation through research that can bring us closer to a world where MS is left in the past.

Caitlin was diagnosed with MS in 2014 after months of unexplained symptoms, including numbness, tingling, fatigue, and cognitive fog.

"When I finally got answers, it was both a relief and an overwhelming experience. But I've learned to be patient with myself, ask for help, and lean on my family, friends, and community. That's why I support Burgers to Beat MS. I love seeing the huge turnout at A&W and feeling that sense of community and support."

Fueling The Next Generation of MS Discoveries

Since 1948, MS Canada has invested over **$233 million total in research**. In 2025 alone, **$9.1M** was added towards our investment in research, bringing our current investment to a total of **$34.5 million**. But breakthroughs in MS research don't happen alone. They happen because of the collective efforts of our incredible MS community. Your unwavering support and dedication have allowed us to continue pushing boundaries to advance what we know about MS. In 2025, we funded **65 research projects** supporting the ideas of **21 researchers** and **44 trainees**. Together, we can drive progress that will inspire new discoveries today and into the future.

$6.2 million invested in **30 research studies** to advance treatment and care

$1.6 million invested in **7 research studies** to enhance well-being

$24 million invested in **59 research studies** to understand and halt disease progression

$1.5 million invested in **11 research studies** to prevent MS

* Based on MS Canada's current ongoing investment in research of 34.5 million dollars

Canadian Research Leaders on an International Stage

We have created a world-class research engine in Canada comprised of internationally acclaimed scientists who work collaboratively across all fields of study and at all stages of their careers. They drive the research agenda forward to maximize investments and accelerate MS discoveries. **Our MS research community** is like no other, sharing resources, knowledge, and advancements to innovate and have a real impact on the MS community. Our Canadian researchers continue to have an impact on a global scale. **Dr. Jiwon Oh**, **Dr. Ruth Ann Marrie**, **Dr. Helen Tremlett**, and **Dr. Mark Freedman** were part of a global team of MS experts updating the 2024 McDonald Diagnostic Criteria. These criteria mark a new era for timely intervention in MS care, enabling earlier and more accurate diagnosis and treatment, leading to improved long-term health outcomes.

Dr. Mark Freedman received the International Giants of Multiple Sclerosis Award for his groundbreaking research and unwavering dedication to the field. Dr. Freedman has pioneered treatments for aggressive forms of MS and championed the development of biomarkers to easily monitor disease activity.

Canadian neurologist and MS Canada funded researcher, **Dr. Kristen Krysko**, was awarded the 2025 Rachel Horne Prize for Women's Research in MS. Dr. Krysko's pioneering research helps inform the care of women living with MS during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

SCAN TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Building research capacity

Our Canadian MS research community is fueled, in part, by the endMS National Training Program (NTP), a talent pipeline that attracts, trains, and retains the next generation of MS researchers. Two outstanding alumni received awards this year. **Dr. Adam Groh** received the Outstanding Scholars in Neuroscience Award Program (OSNAP) from the National Institutes of Health, designed to recognize those leading in exceptional neuroscience research. Current trainee completing her MD/PhD, **Katherine Sawicka**, was awarded the best presentation after being selected to present in the Whitaker track for young investigators, a highly competitive North American Award presented by the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers.

During his undergraduate studies, Paul worked at a camp for children with disabilities and supported children with pediatric-onset MS (POMS).

"The experience of working at this summer camp was the reason I wanted to be an occupational therapist as well as a researcher."

After completing his PhD, Paul joined Dr. Ann Yeh's work in POMS at SickKids and soon realized that many of her patients had attended that same MS camp he'd worked at.

"It was a full circle moment that I will always remember and cherish"

Dr. Paul Yoo, Former endMS Trainee

$1.2 million reinvested in 2025 in the endMS National Training Program to support the next generation of promising MS researchers

Joshua began work in MS in 2008 as a graduate student and joined the endMS summer school in 2010. His research at the time explored environmental and genetic factors related to MS, with a focus on Asian populations. Over the past decade, he continued his training to become an MS neurologist and scientist. He is now a clinical assistant professor of neurology at the University of British Columbia.

"From early on in my career, I was captivated by the fact that we have known about this disease for centuries, yet there is so much we still don't understand about it. I wanted to change that. Seeing all the progress made in the past few years is exciting. There is endless potential left in learning more about MS and how to best support Canadians living with it."

Dr. Joshua Lee, Former endMS Trainee

This year alone, five of our previously funded trainees secured tenure-track academic positions, each continuing to advance MS research as independent investigators. Your investment made that possible. Not only launching scientific careers but strengthening the web of collaboration across the MS research community that drives breakthroughs forward and compounds impact over time.

Congratulations to:

Nabeela Nathoo
University of Alberta

Simon Thebault
McGill University

Stephanie Zandee
McGill University

Paul Yoo
Colorado State University

Joshua Lee
University of British Columbia

Our Impact Goals in Action- Research at a Glance

One thing is clear: our community shows up. Every year, they bring their skills, interests, and drive to every point of connection they engage in, whether it's participating in an MS Walk or MS Bike event, volunteering their time, or pursuing a career as researchers catalyzing MS discoveries. Together, we enable progress across all four of our impact goals.

Advance Treatment and Care

We've reached a pivotal moment in our understanding of MS. Decades of research and treatment advances have revealed that MS exists along a continuum, shaped by complex biological processes that begin early and evolve over time. This shift in our understanding of MS has paved the way to new pathways of discovery, allowing us to improve our ability to diagnose, monitor, and treat MS.

Precision Medicine

Therapeutic advances

This year, there has been a surge of new and emerging therapies targeted towards compartmentalized inflammation, aggressive forms of MS, and progression-related disease activity. At the same time, recent work has shown both the safety and efficacy of ocrelizumab to support underserved populations such as children and expectant mothers living with MS.

The rise of Bruton Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors (BTKIs)

BTKis are taking centre stage as a new class of molecules that cross the blood-brain barrier, enabling them to act on the compartmentalized inflammation that drives disease progression. There are three different BTKis in differing stages of clinical trials, a standout this year is Fenebrutinib, coming from several research teams, including Dr. Jiwon Oh's. People with relapsing MS taking Fenebrutinib for two years saw nearly eliminated disease activity, dramatically reducing both relapse activity and disease progression. Phase III testing is currently underway.

Expanding the impact of Ocrelizumab

Pediatric MS	Pregnancy & Lactation	New Formulation
An important clinical trial showed that Ocrelizumab is both effective and safe for children and youth with MS. People taking it showed an improved ability to recover from relapses, compared to fingolimod, a currently approved drug. These findings are the first step in adding ocrelizumab to the limited treatment options available for this population.	Real-world tracking showed that mothers treated with ocrelizumab during pregnancy and lactation did not show significant impairment in the growth of their infant or in the baby's ability to produce immune protection in response to standard vaccines. This finding brings much-needed reassurance around family planning with MS.	Research has shown that a twice-yearly subcutaneous injection works just as well and is just as safe as the IV (intravenous) version, giving people living with MS a more convenient treatment option. This new formulation significantly reduces the time spent at treatment centres and could make it easier for people who live far from specialized clinics to access their care.

Clinical Care Guidelines

The newly released diagnostic and treatment guidelines enable the application of new insights and advanced tools that can identify and monitor disease activity.

2024 Revised McDonald Diagnostic Criteria

A committee of 55 experts in MS from 16 different countries reviewed and updated the 2017 McDonald Diagnostic Criteria. This work was driven by new advances in MRI technologies and the discovery of new biomarkers.

It's important to note that while the update will improve the diagnostic experience moving forward, it will not impact previous diagnoses. The updated diagnostic criteria will:

- Make it easier to diagnose MS
- Allow for earlier diagnosis of MS
- Allow for more specificity in diagnoses, ensuring it is truly MS and not another condition

Consensus Guidelines in Canada in High Efficacy Drug Treatment

12 Canadian MS neurologists from across the country joined forces to develop national recommendations to help neurologists decide when and how to start, adjust, or stop higher efficacy DMTs, thus improving care and long-term health outcomes of all people living with MS.

"When I was first diagnosed, I remember the doctor saying we need to start treatment. I had a choice of two different medications. Today, with the advancements of science and research, we have more options to choose from."

Lizelle, lives with MS.

Programs in Action

Beyond supporting the advancement of research, **your support had a tangible positive community impact**. We continued providing the MS community with valuable access to information through our MS Knowledge Network and Education programming, as well as support programs to help improve the well-being of all Canadians living with MS.

Answered **10,090 inquiries** through our Knowledge Network.

"Thank you for providing this! There is so much "Information" out there that is daunting and misleading in regards to MS. It is nice to have a resource based on actual science and fact. It is nice to have assistance getting in touch with support groups and talking with others in the same boat. Only one living with MS truly gets it!"

Person living with MS, MS Knowledge Network

5,091 people moved, stretched, recovered and reclaimed their wellbeing through our wellness programs

1:1 Peer Support
183 number of volunteers
144 people supported

Peer support groups
157 number of volunteers
2818 people supported

"A special thank you to all the volunteers. I am very grateful for their support and their absolute dedication. I know I am stronger physically but also mentally. After each session I feel like I've had my battery recharged."

- **Person living with MS**, TIME at Home Program

"My MS journey started with a diagnosis in 2008, but looking back, I had symptoms for years before. Life was a whirlwind. One moment I was living life to the fullest, and the next I was facing a new reality. Dealing with an invisible illness was tough, and I struggled with feeling like I had to hide it."

Terry has been involved in MS Canada's support groups for years, both as a facilitator and a participant. He now supports the online Men's National MS Support Group.

"There's a real need for spaces where men can open up, connect, share, and support one another. The response has been fantastic. Every month, men from across the country join the group and find a space where they can be themselves, feel heard, and connect with others who truly understand what it's like to live with MS."

Terry, Peer support group participant and facilitator

Enhance Well-Being

Improving Eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit

Our community is passionate about enacting meaningful positive change, and every year we see that work pay off. Together with our MS community, we advocate for policies that remove barriers and improve the well-being of all Canadians affected by MS. We raise awareness, influence policy, build relationships, and mobilize Canadians across the country to get involved. In 2025, we moved the needle in key areas, including equitable access to treatments and reimbursements, inclusive and diverse research, and enhancements to the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) that can strengthen financial security and improve quality of life. Ahead of the federal election in April, we reached out to all parties to ensure Canadians affected by MS were at the forefront of their planning.

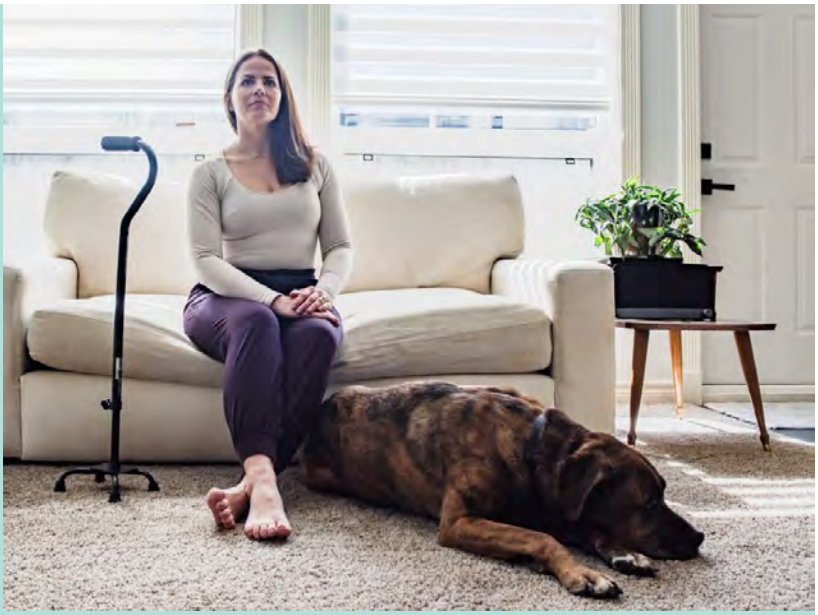
1,200 touchpoints about MS awareness month with politicians

80 advocacy meetings with elected officials and government representatives

71 submissions advocating for policy change

16,625 letters sent by the MS community to elected officials

For years, Edmonton-based MS Canada volunteer, **Amanda Fraser**, has been a strong advocate for income and employment security. In 2025, she focused her efforts on advocating for improved access to the DTC, which is increasingly being used as an entry point into federal disability benefits. She spoke with the Globe and Mail to share her story and demonstrate the restrictive and difficult nature of the eligibility criteria and application process, which can lead to people living with MS falling through the cracks of the healthcare system.



Everyone's MS journey is unique. Amanda saw that a requirement to apply for the DTC was being unable to walk 90% of the time. The form didn't factor in how her chronic pain and fatigue impacted her life; she knew she didn't fit the criteria and realized many people living with MS wouldn't either. That's when she decided to advocate for change in the eligibility criteria.

"I might have given it a shot if it weren't so long, time-consuming, confusing, and associated with a cost. Because I'd also have to go and ask a health care provider to fill out a part of it, too. So I'm asking my very busy neurologist or my very busy family doctor to fill out very long forms, which are probably going to cost me money."

Amanda Fraser, Advocate, MS Canada Volunteer

Volunteers like **Joni Straker** show how advocating for issues that affect daily life can help shape policy changes that positively impact the whole MS community. As part of our ongoing advocacy efforts, Joni spoke with the Saskatchewan Health Minister about the requirement for her MS disease-modifying therapy (DMT) to be renewed annually, sharing the toll of this frequent process and the added uncertainty it creates for someone living with an already unpredictable disease. A few months later, the Saskatchewan government extended DMT renewals from one to two years, an important change that helps reduce that burden.

Each year, MS Ambassadors and volunteers lead an incredible awareness effort from coast to coast, uniting to raise awareness and inspire action. This year, our MS community partnered with local leaders and achieved **125 proclamations, illuminations and flag raisings throughout the country.** These visible acts of solidarity and support spark conversation, foster understanding, and reaffirm our shared commitment to ending MS.

Improving Access to Treatment

Canada's Drug Agency is strengthening their drug-review recommendations by integrating lived-experience directly into the review process. Through this process, members of our MS community are helping shape national decisions around access to MS treatments.

A community member who took part in this new review process shared the impact it has on them:

"I have to admit, I got emotional when I received the news of the positive recommendation…to think I even had a small impact in this decision is beyond belief."

Julia Nimilowich, *Lives with MS.*

MS Canada, alongside the Canadian Network of MS Clinics, is advocating for provincial/ territorial formulary updates to align with all recommendations.

The Canadian research community is also working hard to improve access to treatment across the country. A key publication in 2025 demonstrated a lack of equity in access to DMTs for children and youth living with pediatric MS within Canada. Their research identifies gaps in healthcare, motivating our advocacy team and MS community to push for policy changes.

(Left to right) **Chelsey, Molly and Sarah**. Molly and Sarah both live with MS.

Expanding inclusivity in research

Research continues its steady shift toward better understanding the diverse realities of living with MS. Over the past year, this ongoing commitment has focused on generating crucial new insights into aging, women's health and menopause, as well as overall community diversity within the MS community.

MS and Diversity

Two Canadian initiatives are helping transform how we understand who is affected by MS. MS Canada–funded research led by **Dr. Ruth Ann Marrie** is uncovering major gaps in our knowledge about the diversity of people living with MS in Canada, underscoring how little we currently know about underrepresented groups. This highlights two important areas of focus. Improving the inclusion of underrepresented groups in MS research and ensuring standardized reporting of diversity characteristics - work she and her team continue to do.

Kelly-Ann, lives with MS

Dr. Nabeela Nathoo, a newly appointed Assistant Professor, is establishing her new lab with a specific focus being placed on underrepresented groups in MS. This past year her team has published some of the first-ever work looking into the MS experience within the Indigenous community.

"Often those from underrepresented populations have different risk factors for developing MS and can have more aggressive MS, and hence it is important to study them—to understand their disease better, to get a better understanding of MS overall, and to optimize care for all living with MS"

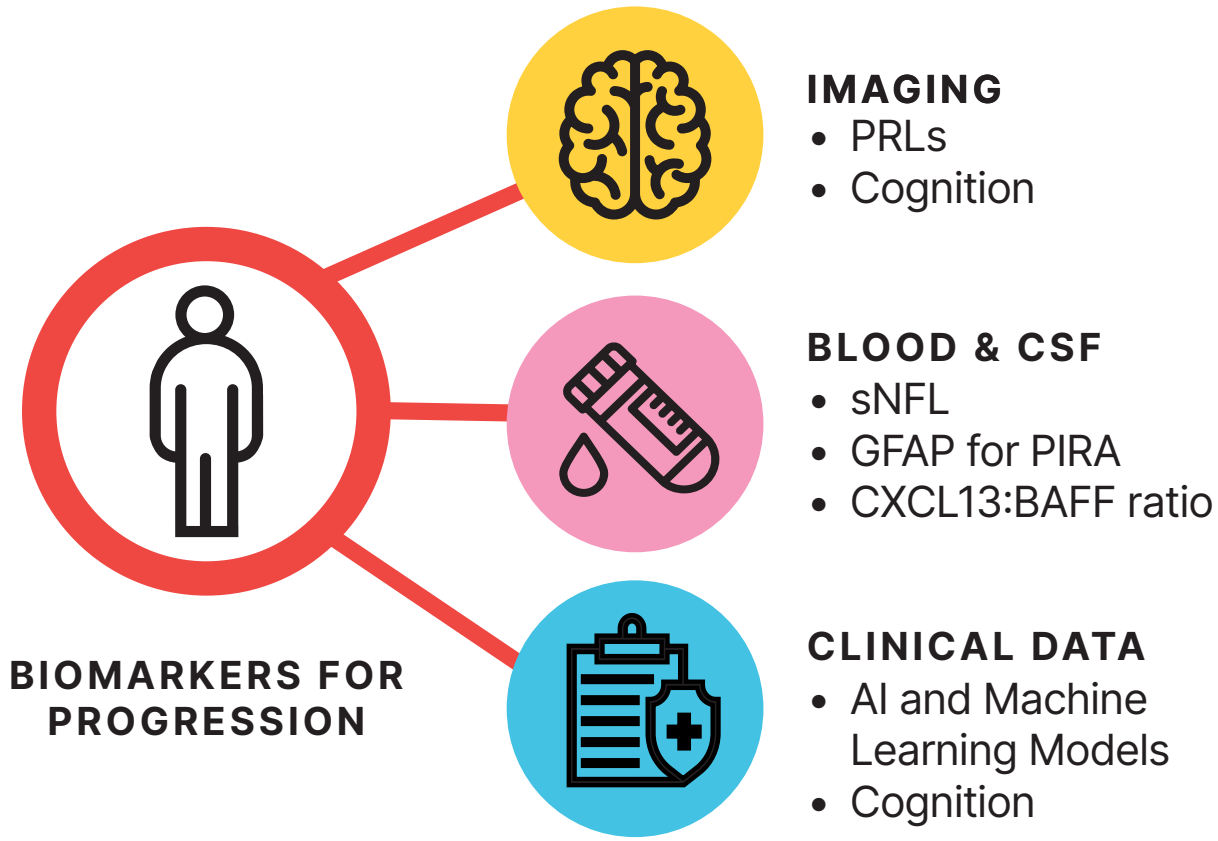
Dr. Nabella Nathoo

Understand and Halt Disease Progression

With a better understanding of the biological basis of MS, we now know that compartmentalized inflammation is a main driver of disability progression. Researchers are now building powerful tools ranging from biomarkers to AI-driven analyses to detect this type of disease progression and develop targets for new therapies. At the same time, new findings show the possibility of repairing lost function.

Advancements in Biomarkers and Outcome Measures

This year alone, there have been multiple new biomarker discoveries specifically designed to monitor disease progression and one of its main culprits, Progression Independent of Relapse Activity (PIRA). PIRA has become a central focus in MS research, because it reflects the "silent" worsening of disability that continues even when relapses are under control. By finding ways to measure this often-silent form of progression, neurologists can make more informed treatment decisions to improve care outcomes.



With support from MS Canada, **Drs. Gommerman and Ramaglia**, have identified a molecular circuit at the brain border that supports compartmentalized inflammation and drives grey matter injury in a model of MS. Leveraging this discovery, they identified the ratio of CXCL13:BAFF proteins at the brain border as a proxy of compartmentalized inflammation in the MS model and in individuals with MS, highlighting its potential as a novel surrogate biomarker of this process.

"If we can use the ratio as a proxy to tell which patients should be treated with a drug that targets compartmentalized inflammation, that can revolutionize the way we do clinical trials and how we treat patients"

Dr. Valeria Ramaglia

AI and Machine Learning applied to Big Data

We continue to see major advances from our ongoing investment in the International Progressive MS Alliance. In 2025, the Alliance launched the MS Clinical and Imaging Data Resource (CIDR), a global, harmonized database built on Alliance-funded work led by Dr. Douglas Arnold that brings together large-scale MRI and clinical trial data from people with MS, focusing on progressive MS. This unique shared resource provides "big data" to enable researchers to develop AI and machine learning methods to detect signs of MS progression. By using advanced computing tools, researchers are poised to accelerate biomarker discovery and enable the prediction of whether treatments will be effective against disease progression, a current gap in care.

"Ideally, the new AI-based tools and other statistical methods should optimize trials, so they'll be shorter, more efficient, and, hopefully, more successful," Dr. Arnold (source)

Cognition as a Marker of Progression

Cognition is now becoming increasingly recognized as one of the earliest warning signs that MS may be progressing, often changing years before walking, balance, or dexterity are noticeably affected. Dr. Maria Pia Amato gave the opening plenary at ECTRIMS where she used years of research to demonstrate that effectively measuring cognition from onset of disease is key to being able to detect subtle changes as the disease progresses. The message was clear, recognizing cognition as a sensitive early indicator of progression can help alert people living with MS and their clinicians to changes in disease progression before traditional disability measures detect them.

Repair and Restore

As we inch closer towards halting progression, the field is also working tirelessly towards the goal of repairing MS damage and restoring lost function. There have been some major breakthroughs this year that have shown that these goals are within reach and the pathways to achieving them are plentiful.

O'Hand Trial – Recovery in Function in Progressive MS

A study led by **Dr. Gavin Giovannoni** and team, including **Dr. Jiwon Oh**, found that treatment with ocrelizumab in people living with primary progressive MS led to improvements in upper limb function, while reducing disability progression. These findings are the first to confirm that MS is modifiable throughout the disease course and there is in fact capacity to regain function in advanced MS.

Repair – Exercise and Remyelination

Myelin repair is not only modulated by therapies, new evidence suggests that aerobic exercise can also increase it. This important work was catalyzed by previous laboratory findings by **Dr. Wee Yong**, who leads the field in biological mechanisms of remyelination in MS. **Dr. Lindsey Wooliscroft**'s findings provide crucial biological evidence that help explain the benefits of exercise in MS.

There are multiple researchers working in the background working to advance the field of remyelination research and making these larger trials possible.

Dr. Miron understands the importance of your investments in driving this work forward.

"Thank you for your interest in supporting MS research. Your generosity through MS Canada has, and will, directly support work focused on myelin repair. An area that I believe is bringing us closer to something truly transformative for people living with MS. We can't do it alone. Continued support from you is what makes the difference between promising ideas and real-world impact. I'm hopeful that, together, we can move toward a future where MS no longer defines lives."

Dr. Veronique Miron, St. Michael's Hospital

Prevent MS

An important aspect of prevention is being able to detect MS at the very earliest stages of disease, before clear symptoms appear. This opens the door to intervening sooner, to stop MS before it fully takes hold. Over the past decades, we have discovered a multitude of risk factors. Now our scientists are hard at work pushing our understanding of how known factors interact, discovering new risk factors, and developing biomarkers that signal increased risk or a possible MS prodrome. This growing knowledge base is opening new possibilities for targeted early interventions that could delay, or even prevent, the onset of MS.

Maximizing Impact Through Global Partnerships

This year, MS Canada in partnership with MS Australia, held the **world's first Global MS Prevention Initiative workshop**, where the world's top experts, people living with MS, and MS organizations worked in unity to identify priorities and map a pathway towards prevention. The recommendations from this workshop, published in the leading *Multiple Sclerosis Journal*, have set the stage for a global prevention agenda for MS.

The lead author on the publication had this to say on the state of MS prevention

"Recent scientific breakthroughs in understanding the disease and successes in preventing other autoimmune conditions now offer new hope that this is no longer an aspirational goal, but a realistic one."

Dr. Ruth Ann Marrie

"There is a growing sense of momentum in MS research, and it is inspiring to witness. Supporting MS Canada allows us to be part of work that is improving quality of life today while also looking ahead to prevention and repair. Our family's experience with MS continues to motivate us to support research that can change outcomes for others. The progress being made offers real hope for the future."

Patricia Barford Mann, Executive Director, The Ralph M. Barford Foundation

Risk Factors

Every year, new research sharpens our understanding of who is at risk of MS and why. This year, studies have shown:

Pediatric MS

A significant link between higher ozone air pollution with greater risk of pediatric-onset MS and prolonged breastfeeding to a lower risk, underscoring how early-life environments matter.

Environmental and lifestyle factors

Work in adults shows that higher intake of ultra-processed foods is associated with increased disease activity in early MS and that maintaining higher vitamin D levels may reduce MS risk, in at least some populations.

EBV and mononucleosis

A 20-year observational study found that infectious mononucleosis caused by Epstein-Barr virus is associated with a higher incidence of MS, reinforcing EBV as a key target for future preventive strategies.

Each of these studies adds another piece to the MS risk puzzle and points to concrete levers that can help reduce future MS cases and drive prevention-focused policies.

Preclinical MS

The MS Prodrome

Dr. Helen Tremlett and team continue to shed light on the earliest stages of MS. This year their work uncovered health changes up to 15 years before typical MS symptom onset. These findings suggest that MS may begin much earlier than previously recognized, with mental health–related issues as early indicators, highlighting opportunities for earlier identification and intervention. Her team also demonstrated that the MS prodrome is present in individuals with pediatric-onset MS.

"I think I'm most inspired by people who live with MS and have the time or are willing to talk to us as researchers about their journey with the disease."

Dr. Helen Tremlett

Measuring Preclinical MS

As evidence grows around the cluster of non-specific signs and symptoms of the prodromal MS, the research community is turning their attention towards identifying and measuring this stage of the disease. A growing body of work shows that subtle immune system disturbances occur several years before an MS diagnosis. Lower cognitive performance is also present within this period and is emerging as a potential early signal of disease activity, positioning cognition as a meaningful outcome measure for preclinical MS. In parallel, new biomarker work suggests that myelin and axonal damage can be detected before clinical onset, raising the possibility of screening high risk individuals to spot MS-related changes sooner.

Powering Progress Through Community Connection

Our MS community is determined, passionate, and driven to enact change.

In 2025, nearly half of Canadians newly diagnosed with MS found support through our MS community. Whether they meet at a fundraising event like MS Walk, take part in a program or support group, or simply reach out to the MS Knowledge Network online to learn more about MS. Whichever path leads them to joining our MS community, one thing is for certain: **community connection fuels progress**.

What starts as one singular touchpoint into our MS community grows into a complex network of support that ensures no Canadian living with MS feels alone. Below are a few stories demonstrating **the power of community connection and the ripple effect that fostering this sense of belonging can have in our collective journey toward a world free of MS.**

Guided **45%** of newly diagnosed Canadians on their journey with MS.

"What it ended up giving me is a network of people who have the disease and who really understand what living with MS means."

Jean-Sébastien, lives with MS

Walking for MS turns into a six-figure Skijoring WeChallenge MS Fundraiser

James was diagnosed at 25 years old, right before his son's first birthday. He never expected to be diagnosed with MS. His early diagnosis allowed him to begin treatment right away, which he believes has been key in keeping him healthy over the past two decades. Soon after his diagnosis, James joined MS Walk to find a community that understood what he was going through.

"When I was diagnosed, I heard about the St. Paul MS Walk on the radio," he said. "At first, it was just me, my wife, and immediate family participating, but friends and coworkers quickly joined. Our first year, we had 60 people on our team and raised over $20,000!"

James, lives with MS

His drive to challenge MS resulted in him bringing together his entire personal network to participate in the MS Walk, his friends, family and coworkers came to show their support. Ever since then, James has been consistently raising upwards of $30,000 each year. But he knew he could take his fight against MS further. Alongside his family, James launched a WeChallenge MS Skijoring event inspired by his family's love of horses. In this event, skiers are pulled by horses across snow, and in the last four years, they have raised over $100,000.

"Nobody having MS ever again—can you imagine?

As long as I'm physically able, that's what all of my passion and fundraising will go toward."

James, lives with MS

Community Connection Fosters Sense of Belonging in Family Living with MS

Brennan was diagnosed with MS in 2013 and felt overwhelmed with uncertainty. His grandmother, Alice, lived with MS too. Knowing that MS affected multiple generations of his family, he was motivated to do more. What he didn't expect was finding so much support in the community MS Bike events foster.

"Through MS Bike, I've built relationships that mean the world to me. The memories I've made through this journey are moments I'll carry with me forever. To the MS community, thank you for lifting me up, riding beside me, and reminding me that I'm never alone. This community is truly something special, and I feel lucky every day to be part of it"

Brennan, lives with MS

1,682 volunteers ensured our Walk and Bike events ran smoothly

257 volunteers helped deliver essential support programs

Deepening Connection to Amplify Community Impact

In September, 2025, six highly engaged community volunteers in Hamilton, Ontario, came together to create a local community hub after years of volunteering as Peer-to-Peer support facilitators and participating in MS Walk and Burgers to Beat MS. Inspired by the strong sense of community they had built, they set out to grow connections within their neighbourhood. Their efforts quickly gained momentum, with more than 20 people attending, some for the very first time, to learn about MS in Canada and new ways to get involved in the community.

Investing in the MS Research Community Leads to Innovation

Last year, **Dr. Atefeh Rayatpour**, was awarded the inaugural *Rebecca Scott Rawn endMS Fellowship* through MS Canada's Personnel Award competition. Today, she is a postdoctoral fellow at the Hotchkiss Brain Institute at the University of Calgary, under the supervision of Dr. Wee Yong. Her current research focuses on understanding contributors to neuroinflammation and demyelination in MS. Her goal is to test new antioxidant treatments to determine if they can effectively protect nerve cells and promote brain repair.

Dr. Atefeh believes that receiving funding through MS Canada was crucial in allowing her to explore innovative approaches and techniques that might otherwise be inaccessible. "It also opened doors to collaborative opportunities with leading scientists and institutions, enhancing the quality and impact of my work".

"Thank you once again for believing in the importance of MS research and for empowering early-career scientists like me to pursue discoveries that can make a real difference. I am truly honoured to have your support."

Dr. Atefeh Rayatpour

There are many ways to support Canadians living with MS through MS Canada. One-time donations, corporate sponsorships, or peer-to-peer events like MS Walk and MS Bike. People can also give monthly or annually, offer a legacy gift, or contribute through workplace giving. Not all support is monetary. Giving time, talent, and treasure can make a meaningful difference in the lives of Canadians with MS. We are grateful for all who help to advance our shared mission and vision. Funds donated help drive innovation in research, deliver support and wellness programs, expand education and advocacy efforts, and strengthen community connection.

$4.8 million total raised by 86 legacy donors

Amy Bienkowski shared with us her family's story, the impact that MS has had on them, and their hopes for the future. Amy's mom, **Margaret Higgins**, was diagnosed with MS soon after Amy's sister Anne was born in 1972. Margaret passed away at age 64, and Anne passed 12 years after. Before passing, Anne left a bequest for MS Canada in her will. Legacy gifts like Anne's are powerful expressions of hope and determination - acts that ripple far beyond one single lifetime. Inspired by the profound impact MS had on her family, Anne chose to build a legacy in her mother's name, one rooted in resilience and the hope that a cure will soon be within reach. Her hope was that by entrusting MS Canada with this gift, she'd help drive progress for all Canadians living with MS today and tomorrow.

"My mother would be amazed to learn of all the new research and treatments available today, many of which were not available when she was alive."

Amy Bienkowski

Every gift counts! Over **1.4 million dollars** raised through 113,429 gifts under $20

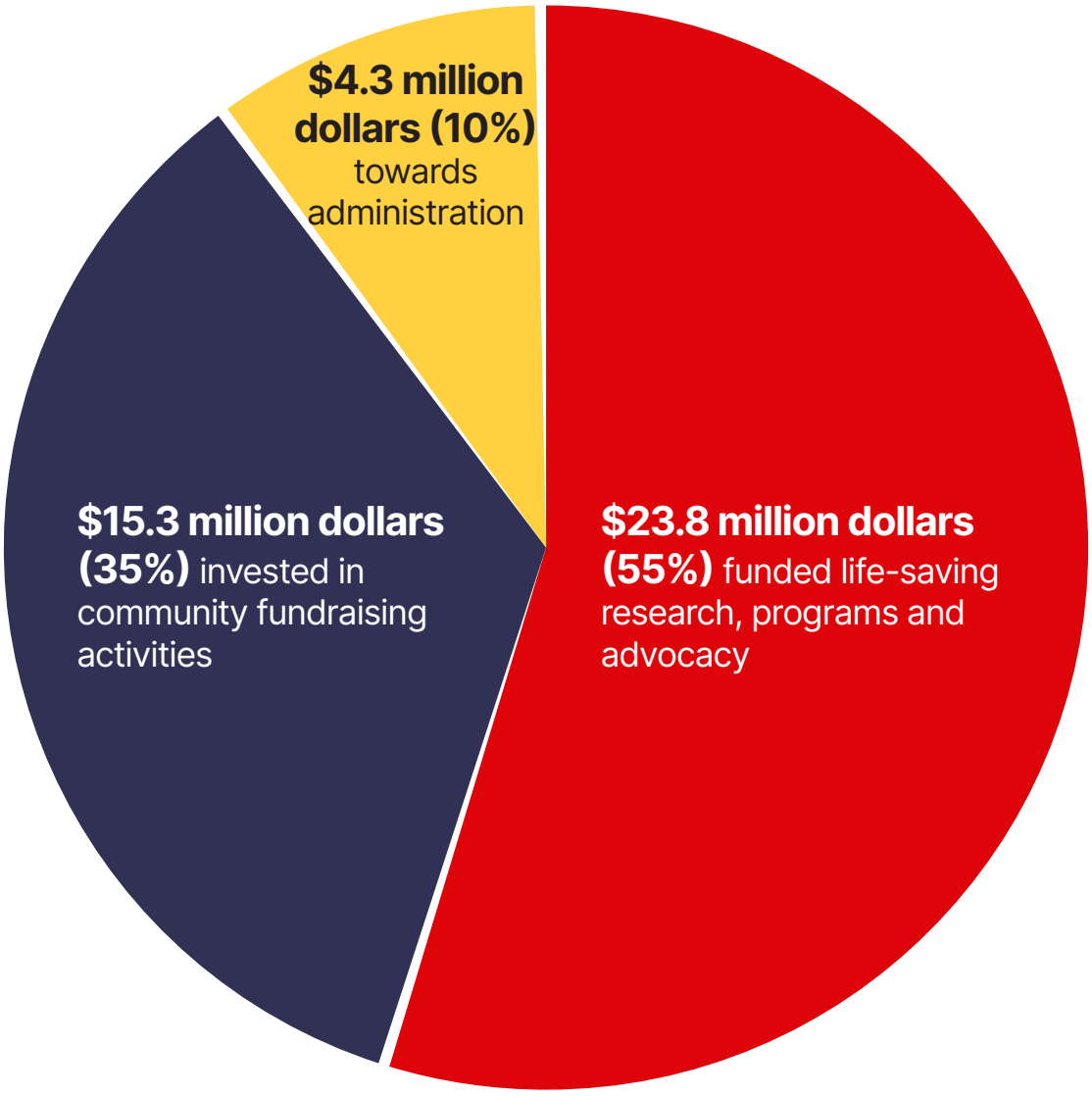
1.89 million dollars raised with the support of 9,250 monthly donors

Become a monthly donor to support all Canadians living with MS. Your support will power research that moves us closer to a world free of MS.

SCAN HERE

Financials

Of the **$42.6 million** dollars raised in 2025 and the **$840,479** dollars drawn from reserves, **$43.4 million dollars** were invested in life-changing research, advocating for system change, and mobilizing the community to make impact in support of people living with MS as follows:



250 Dundas Street W.
Suite 500
Toronto, ON
M5T 2Z5

1-800-268-7582
info@mscanada.ca
mscanada.ca

MS Canada