



# MONDAYS WITH D<sup>R</sup> MARK & D<sup>R</sup> MICHAEL

Monday, June 2, 2025 | 1:00 – 2:00PM

## TOPIC #45

Breaking the Silence: How Employers Can Lead on MS Support



# Guest speaker:



**Gina Ross Murdoch**

President and CEO

*Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA)*

# The Epidemiology of Multiple Sclerosis

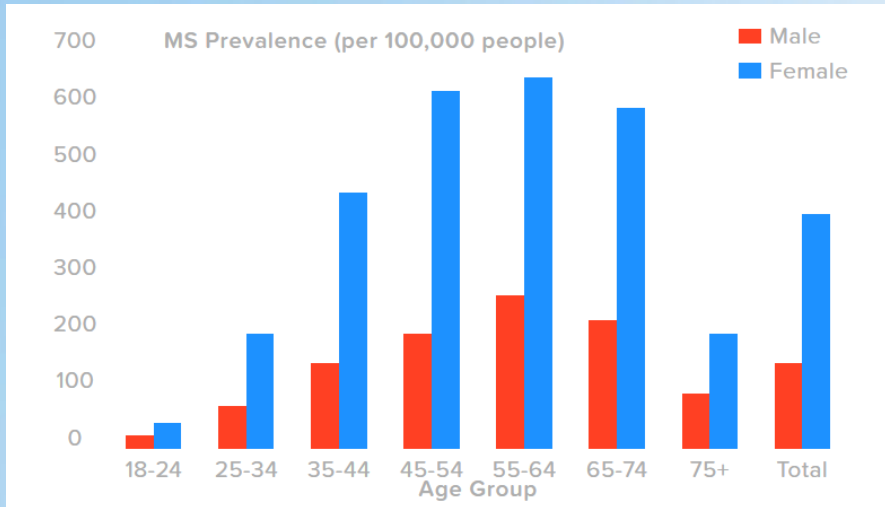
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic inflammatory demyelinating disease of the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS consists of the brain, optic nerves and spinal cord.
- With MS, areas of the CNS become inflamed, damaging the protective covering (known as “**myelin**”) that surrounds and insulates the nerves (known as “**axons**”).
- Multiple sclerosis affects each person differently.
- The most common types of MS are:
  - Relapsing-Remitting MS (RRMS)
  - Secondary-Progressive MS (SPMS)
  - Primary-Progressing MS (PPMS)

# Common Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis

- Fatigue
- Mobility issues
- Heat sensitivity
- Bladder/bowel problems
- Vision problems
- Cognitive issues (i.e. thinking and memory issues)
- Spasticity
- Tremor
- Pain
- Neuropathy (i.e. numbness, tingling)

# Multiple Sclerosis: Prevalence & Impact

A recent landmark study estimates that the number of individuals living with MS in the US is nearly one million,<sup>1</sup> **more than twice the previously reported** prevalence from a 1975 national study.

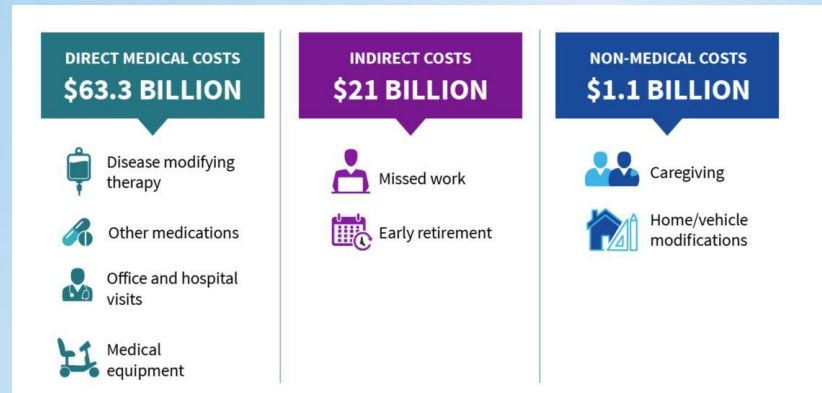


- MS is a heterogeneous and unpredictable chronic disease
- MS is most commonly diagnosed in young adults, but affects adults of all ages<sup>2</sup>
- Pharmacological therapies can play a critical role in managing MS
- MS affects women three times as often as men.

Reference: 1. Wallin MT, et al. *Neurology*. 2019 Mar 5;92(10):e1029-e1040 2. Multiple sclerosis; Symptoms & causes. Mayo Clinic website. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/multiple-sclerosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20350269?p=1>. Accessed 9/10/20.

# The Economic Impact of Multiple Sclerosis

- MS can have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life and is associated with high costs.
- For the nearly 1 million people living with MS in the United States, the annual economic burden — the cost to all of society, including individuals living with MS, employers, health insurers, federal, state and local governments and more — is \$85.4 billion<sup>1</sup>



**Reference:** 1 National Multiple Sclerosis Society. (n.d.). *The Cost of MS*. Retrieved May 28, 2025, from <https://www.nationalmssociety.org/managing-ms/treating-ms/disease-modifying-therapies/cost-of-ms>

# Multiple Sclerosis & Employment

*A 2016 global study revealed:*

People with MS found that **43%** of those who left the workforce due to their MS did so within **3 years** of their diagnosis.<sup>1</sup>

**62%** of MS patients who were unemployed cited fatigue as the biggest barrier to remaining employed.<sup>1</sup>

*“MS often affects people when they are in the first decades of their working lives. The cost to society of losing these people permanently from the workforce is enormous.”*

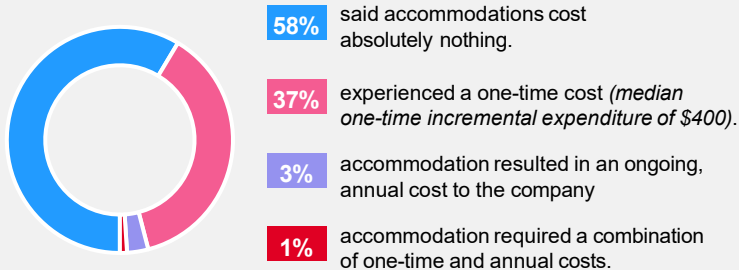
**Peer Baneke**  
CEO of the Multiple Sclerosis  
International Foundation<sup>2</sup>

References: 1. MS International Federation, Global MS Employment Report 2016, May 25. p7. 2. <https://worldmsday.org/msif-releases-research-on-the-economic-impact-of-ms-and-results-of-an-international-survey-on-employment-and-ms-to-mark-world-ms-day-2010/>. Accessed 9/10/20.

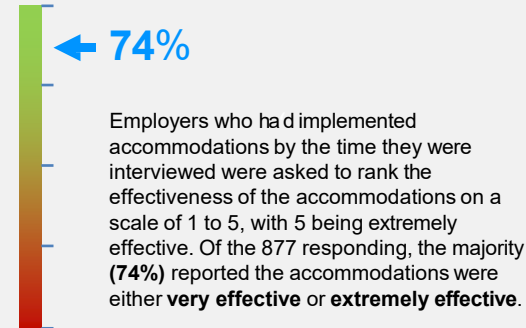
# How Employers Can Support Employees Impacted by Multiple Sclerosis

## 1. Most employers report no cost or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities.

(n= 776 employers)



## 2. Employers report accommodations are effective. (n=877 employers)



Reference: Job Accommodation Network (Updated 9/30/2019). *Workplace accommodations: Low cost, high impact*. <https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm>. Accessed 9/10/20.

Results from the Job Accommodation Network survey of 2,744 employers from 2004 – 2019.



# Employers Experience Direct and Indirect Benefits from Making Accommodations

## Direct Benefits

89%	Retained a valued employee
70%	Increased employee productivity
59%	Eliminated costs associated with training a new employee
55%	Increased the employee's attendance
40%	Increased diversity of the company
36%	Saved workers' compensation or other insurance costs
15%	Hired a qualified person with a disability
10%	Promoted an employee

## Indirect Benefits

63%	Improved interactions with co-workers
61%	Increased overall company morale
55%	Increased overall company productivity
46%	Increased safety
44%	Improved interactions with customers
41%	Increased overall company attendance
29%	Increased profitability
18%	Increased customer base

Reference: Job Accommodation Network (Updated 9/30/2019). *Workplace accommodations: Low cost, high impact.* <https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm>. Accessed 9/10/20.

# Some Practical Examples of Accommodations for People with MS

Since MS is a heterogeneous disease, not all MS patients will need the same accommodations from their employers. Some examples of common accommodations that MS patients may request, include:

## For Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Ergonomic Equipment
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Work from Home or Remotely

## For Worksite Access

- Modified workspace
- Adjustable workstations
- Ramps
- Service or support animal
- Expanded keyboards

## For Temperature Sensitivity

- Heated ergonomic/computer products
- Workspace heaters
- Fans and portable ACs

## For Attentiveness/Concentration

- Alternative Lighting
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets

## For Low Vision

- Enlarged keyboards and screen magnifying software
- Large button/visual display phones
- Magnification tools

Reference: Job Accommodation Network (Updated 9/30/2019). *Accommodations: and Compliance Series Employees with Multiple Sclerosis*. <https://askjan.org/publications/Disability-Downloads.cfm?pubid=382018&action=download&pubtype=pdf>. Accessed 9/10/20.

# Multiple Sclerosis Association of America

**MSAA is a leading resource for the entire MS community, improving lives today through vital services and support.**



Client  
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Community  
Connection

Have specific questions about MS?  
Call our toll-free National Helpline at **(800) 532-7667**  
Or visit our website at [www.mymsaa.org](http://www.mymsaa.org)  
Follow us at [@msassociation](https://twitter.com/msassociation)



**msaa**

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# How to Contact MSAA for More Information

Have specific questions about MS? Call our  
toll-free National Helpline!

**(800) 532-7667,**  
**Extension 154 for English**  
**Extension 131 for Spanish**

**Monday – Thursday: 8:30 AM – 8 PM ET**  
**Friday: 8:30 AM – 5 PM ET**



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# Questions

## Upcoming NEBGH events:

- **June 5** – 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Health & Wellness Benefits Conference
- **June 16** – Mondays with Dr. Mark & Dr. Michael
- **July 16** – NEBGH Summer Networking Event
- **September 18** – 2025 Pharmacy Benefits Conference
- **November 13** – Cancer Summit

