

**First Research Studies Launched in 9 Countries as Part of €22 Million Global Effort to
End Progressive Multiple Sclerosis**

***International Progressive MS Alliance established as
worldwide collaborative with goal to find solutions and treatments for progressive MS***

September 11, 2014, BOSTON, MA, USA - The International Progressive MS Alliance has awarded its first round of 22 research grants to investigators in 9 countries, with the goal of removing barriers to developing treatments for progressive MS. The Alliance is a worldwide collaborative focused on finding solutions to progressive forms of multiple sclerosis that have so far eluded the scientific community.

Long-term investment in finding treatments and solutions for progressive MS

This first round of funding launches an ambitious program that will cumulatively invest €22 million (nearly \$30 million USD) over the next five years and will forge international collaborative research networks -- leveraging research already underway and stimulating new research through the Alliance's significant funding programs.

For this initial offering, 195 research proposals were received from 22 countries throughout the world. "The research community's response to our first call for innovative research proposals has been exceptional, and speaks to both the unmet need and the galvanizing force of this international initiative," noted Cynthia Zagieboylo, Chair of the Alliance Executive Committee and CEO of the National MS Society (USA). "For the first time, MS Societies around the globe are funding research together, without considering geography, in order to find the answers the progressive MS community urgently needs," she added.

World-class institutions and a comprehensive focus

The first grants are short-term innovative pilot studies to begin filling knowledge and infrastructure gaps such as identifying and testing potential treatments; understanding nerve degeneration; and building databanks and biobanks -- repositories of biological samples for use

in research -- to better understand long-term imaging, genetics, and outcomes associated with progressive MS. These pilot studies have terms of one to two years.

The 22 first-round projects will be directed by scientists at leading research universities and companies in these key areas (for comprehensive summaries of each grant please visit www.ProgressiveMSAlliance.org):

- **Clinical trials and outcome measures:** University Hasselt (Belgium), Imperial College London (United Kingdom), Johns Hopkins University (United States), Mount Sinai School of Medicine (United States), Umeå University (Sweden)
- **Biomarkers of progression:** Free University (Netherlands), Vall d'Hebron Research Institute (Spain)
- **Gene studies:** Karolinska Institute (Sweden), University of California-San Francisco (United States), University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)
- **Rehabilitation trials:** Kessler Foundation Research Center (United States), Plymouth University (United Kingdom)
- **Underlying pathology of progression:** Brigham and Women's Hospital (United States), Free University (Netherlands), McGill University (Canada), Monash University (Australia), University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom), University of Verona (Italy), Yale University (United States)
- **Developing new disease models:** Renovo Neural, Inc. (United States), Stanford University (United States)

Strategic funding priorities of the Alliance are being guided by renowned MS researchers from multiple disciplines and countries. They focus on:

- Better understanding progression so treatments can be identified
- Designing shorter, faster clinical trials that measure patient outcomes
- Conducting trials to test agents that stop or reverse progression
- Developing and evaluating new therapies to manage symptoms

“By bringing attention to progressive MS, convening academic and industry leaders, and offering a new source of grant funding to researchers around the world, the Alliance is positioning itself to accelerate results with the most impact and to change the lives of people

living with progressive MS,” commented Dr. Alan Thompson, Chair of the Alliance’s Scientific Steering Committee and Dean of University College London Faculty of Brain Sciences.

More funding opportunities

To ensure accelerated progress, the Alliance will be releasing a new Request for Applications later this year. To learn more about the Alliance and details of the new research awards and upcoming Request for Applications, please visit www.ProgressiveMSAlliance.org

About Progressive MS: Progressive multiple sclerosis, a chronic condition that disrupts the flow of information within the brain and body, is a form of MS that gets worse over time. Each day, progressive MS takes things away from people: vision, mobility, cognition, ability to work, and their very independence. MS is found in every country where studies have been conducted, and more than 2.3 million people worldwide currently live with the disease; over 1 million people live with a progressive form of MS.

About the Alliance: The Progressive MS Alliance is an unprecedented international initiative that is connecting resources and experts around the world to find answers and develop solutions to end progressive MS. The goal of the Alliance is to speed the development of new treatments for progressive MS by funding the best research, wherever it exists. The Alliance is led with management from MS Societies in the United States, Canada, Italy, Australia and the United Kingdom, and the MS International Federation, and expanding financial and resource support from these and other organizations, including the MS Societies of Denmark and Spain. Learn more at www.ProgressiveMSAlliance.org.

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