



Multiple Sclerosis
Association of America

FY24-FY26 Strategic Plan

The Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA) is committed to our mission of *Improving Lives Today* and has been a leader in the MS community for over 50 years. We strive to improve the quality of life for all affected by multiple sclerosis through innovation, collaboration, inclusion, respect, and growth. Looking ahead, MSAA has created an integrated and multi-channel strategic plan that incorporates all voices of the MS community. This plan focuses on the growth of key areas such as, leading health outcomes research; amplifying conversations on health equity; expanding our programmatic offerings, and augmenting the number of those engaged with our mission through communication and financial support avenues. The critical voice of the person living with MS, care partners, and families affected by MS is the foundation for our plan and will be our guiding light at every point along our journey.

MSAA focuses on improving client health outcomes and quality of life by providing a wide array of free supportive programs and services, building leading-edge partnerships and collaborations, and providing innovative educational resources. We look to embark on an audacious strategic journey that will transform the MS community overall as well as improve the life of each individual person living with MS. All plans and goals are firmly grounded in feedback, collaboration, and an unwavering dedication to serving the MS community.

Vision: Enhance the lives of all individuals impacted by multiple sclerosis by helping them to live their best lives with MS.

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

History: MSAA is a national nonprofit organization founded in 1970. Our organization is dedicated to improving lives today through ongoing education, support, and direct services to individuals with MS, their families, and care partners.

Core Values:

We are motivated to achieve our strategic goals and view our core values as the foundation of all aspects of MSAA and how we achieve our goals. We actively pursue collaboration to raise awareness and better serve the MS community.

Compassion:

Every individual that MSAA meets should be treated with compassion, regardless of their reason for reaching out to the organization. Every person living with MS deserves our respect, and they have the right to the greatest quality of life possible.

Dedication:

MSAA is fully dedicated to fulfilling our mission of improving lives today for every member of the MS community.

Teamwork:

By respecting the unique voice, feelings, values, and perspectives that every member of our team brings to MSAA; we come together to support personal growth and a shared vision of improving lives today for the MS community.

Creativity:

We promote creativity by empowering staff members to explore and share their ideas, step outside of the box and generate a culture of flexibility in new ways of doing things.

**Diversity, Inclusion
and Health Equity:**

We are committed to celebrating diversity, actively advocating for health equity, and fostering an inclusive environment for all at MSAA and in the MS community.

Over the next three years, MSAA will:

1. Increase activity and engagement in addressing health equity issues in the MS community.
2. Strengthen connections and expand actions to support living the best possible life with MS.
3. Champion the importance of self-advocacy and the client voice in shared decision-making.
4. Drive improvements in MS care by propelling implementation research.



Increase activity and engagement in addressing health equity issues in the MS community.

The last few years have brought to light the serious and institutionalized disparities that underserved MS populations and marginalized communities have experienced for far too long. These groups include American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, people living with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, and underserved rural populations. While some of these disparities are caused by the health inequities in our healthcare system, there are also differences in how MS impacts communities of color. We have seen barriers in access to basic and comprehensive care, either in person or virtually, for underserved MS communities. Trying to coordinate MS care and treatment without a sense of trust and partnership can have a significantly negative impact on health outcomes. To address these issues, we will focus on the following benchmarks, goals, and metrics to evaluate our progress.

Evaluation Benchmarks:

- Lead the MS community in addressing health equity issues.
- Convene powerful and relevant conversations with community and patient leaders from underserved communities to address unmet needs and plan for future impact.
- Create educational opportunities to enhance health literacy, increase awareness about the prevalence of MS in communities of color, and build cultural humility in an effort to improve patient-provider interaction.
- Reflect the diversity of the MS community in our communication.
- Expand awareness about our MRI Access Program, Cooling, and Equipment Programs among underserved communities.

Strengthen connections and expand actions to support living the best possible life with MS.

The world is moving towards a post-pandemic culture where connection and community are vital and experienced in new ways. To meet the growing and evolving needs of the MS community, MSAA will create and augment ways to support the mission financially and connect across the country. Key aspects of these strategic goals are the return of in-person fundraising opportunities, building relationships in the corporate sector, expansion of communications outreach, greater visibility of MSAA's critical capabilities, and new ways to deliver much-needed programming. To address these issues, we will focus on the following benchmarks, goals, and metrics to evaluate our progress.

Evaluation Benchmarks:

- Create and augment opportunities to financially support MSAA's mission now and in the future.
- Amplify MSAA's mission through educational presentations and participation on external advisory boards.
- Develop content highlighting the latest in MS research, treatments, and lifestyle changes for optimal disease management and wellbeing.
- Expand access to critical resources and tools through MSAA's programs, services, and communication.

Champion the importance of self-advocacy and the client voice in shared decision-making

Self-advocacy supporting shared decision-making is critical to managing a complex and chronic disease like multiple sclerosis. To be a strong self-advocate, a person impacted by MS must have information, education, sources of support, and a sense of connection. MSAA looks to provide these resources to the person living with MS, the family unit supporting that person, and the medical community treating those living with MS. Barriers to effective self-advocacy can stem from stigma about mental health or a lack of true collaboration between the client and those caring for them.

Shared decision-making is a critical concept in managing multiple sclerosis worldwide. The importance of self-advocacy, communication, and connection between the person living with MS and their care team cannot be overstated. This concept of shared decision-making entails focusing not only on the physical impact of MS but also the mental health strain from the disease itself and from living with a chronic disease.

To address these issues, we will focus on the following benchmarks, goals, and metrics to evaluate our progress both domestically and internationally.

Evaluation Benchmark:

- Create opportunities for engagement and education around shared decision-making that improves understanding and initiates action.
- Expand impact as an international leader of shared decision initiatives.
- Break down barriers around mental health issues in MS by emphasizing education and self-care.

Drive improvements in MS care by propelling implementation research.

The Multiple Sclerosis Implementation Network (MSIN) is a patient-driven collaborative improvement, implementation, and innovation research network that connects participating MS care centers across the country. In sharing data and experiences, participating centers can learn from each other with the goals of outcome and care improvement for people living with multiple sclerosis.

Through partnerships with leading multiple sclerosis care centers, the MSIN will build a learning health network and community of practice for improvement, innovation, and implementation research aimed to optimize health and improve outcomes for people with MS. This study will evaluate system-level variations in processes and outcomes of MS care, evaluate a learning health system, and help to develop a consensus regarding best practices for people living with MS.

Evaluation Benchmarks:

- Establish a multi-center system-level registry-enabled coproduction learning health network.
- Create a patient-centered implementation science research network to study variations in system-level performance and related population outcomes for MS.
- Test the implementation of evidence-based interventions.
- Work in real time to improve care quality, value and outcomes for people with MS, health systems, payors, and policy makers.