MS Support Foundation Expands Outreach and Support for Individuals Living with Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) affects an estimated 3.1 million people worldwide and nearly 1 million people in the United States. The Northeast continues to have one of the highest prevalence rates of MS in the country, with Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont among the states most impacted by the disease.

Founded in 2006, the MS Support Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing education, support, advocacy, and resources to individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis, their families, caregivers, and healthcare providers.

Currently the organization is entering an exciting new chapter under the leadership of Board President Wende Carver, Executive Director Gwen Cariddi and Office Manager, Cheryl Witherell who are committed to expanding awareness of the Foundation's services and increasing support for the local MS community.

"While tremendous progress has been made in the treatment of Multiple Sclerosis over the past two decades, many individuals and families still struggle to find the information, support, and resources they need close to home," said Cariddi. "Our goal is to ensure that no one faces this diagnosis alone."

The MS Support Foundation serves not only Berkshire County, where there are an estimated 377 individuals living with MS, but also extends support and educational resources to neighboring communities throughout the Capital Region of New York and Southern Vermont. These regions are part of the northeastern United States, where MS prevalence is significantly higher than the national average.

Several members of the Foundation's Board of Directors have personal connections to Multiple Sclerosis, either through their own diagnosis or through a family member, friend, or loved one living with the disease. They understand firsthand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that often accompany an MS diagnosis. While significant advances in therapies have improved quality of life and outcomes for many people living with MS, the need for local support, education, and community-based resources remains as critical as ever.

The MS Support Foundation currently provides:

- Monthly support group meetings via Zoom
- Three to four free educational programs annually featuring healthcare experts and guest speakers
- Access to a lending library of educational materials
- Medical equipment assistance
- Computer and internet access
- Online resources through social media and the Foundation website
- Referrals to community resources and support services

Education remains at the heart of the organization's mission. Individuals living with MS must have access to the latest information to advocate effectively for their health and well-being. Increased awareness within the healthcare community is equally important, as MS can still be misdiagnosed or experience lengthy delays before diagnosis.

"The more informed patients, families, and healthcare providers are, the better the outcomes can be," said Carver. "Our Foundation is committed to bringing reliable information and meaningful support to those impacted by MS throughout Berkshire County and the surrounding region."

The MS Support Foundation invites community members, healthcare professionals, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to join its mission of improving the lives of those affected by Multiple Sclerosis.

To learn more about the Foundation's programs, volunteer opportunities, sponsorships, or ways to contribute, visit www.mssupportfoundation.org, email officestaff@msresource.org or contact Gwen Cariddi, Executive Director, at (413) 664-2011.