

November 30, 2009

Dear MDA Families and Friends:

Since my letter of August 24, the economic challenges we're facing have not improved. All of us continue to face one of the worst financial crises of our time. For MDA, that meant last year an income shortfall of \$25 million and this year a current anticipated campaign income shortfall of an additional \$14 million. As you're aware, this year's Telethon was down nearly \$5 million from that of last year.

We're currently struggling with developing a balanced budget for 2010, which means further expense reductions. To date, we've closed 21 field offices and retrenched 120 positions. We're continuing the reduction of clinic grants by 10%, as well as reducing by 5% second and third-year funding for research grant renewals. Nonetheless, we now find ourselves needing to make the following cost adjustments in order to preserve to the greatest extent possible our most critical research and services initiatives. Accordingly, effective January 1, 2010, MDA will no longer:

- Assist with the purchase of new durable medical equipment. We'll make every effort to meet equipment needs through our National Equipment Resource Program (formerly MDA equipment loan closets).
- Cover the cost of transportation to MDA clinic appointments. MDA staff stands ready to assist with obtaining transportation to clinic through local resources.

Although we're faced with belt-tightening, MDA will continue to fund world-renowned therapeutic and cure-driven research and a wide range of clinical and support services as follows:

- Nationwide network of clinics
- Award-winning Quest magazine and access to MDA's library of educational videos and publications
- MDA Summer Camp for children ages 6 – 17
- Provision of \$500 annual financial assistance for durable medical equipment repairs, adjustments and training
- Loans of durable medical equipment through our National Equipment Resource Program
- Seasonal and H1N1 flu shots

- Advocacy programs including an array of federal legislative and health policy initiatives.
- Transitional services initiative designed to provide expanded resources for those entering into adulthood
- School advocacy assistance (including faculty in-services, class assemblies, IEP/504 Plan support and educational materials for school professionals)
- Community listings of state and local resource information
- Informational websites – [mda.org](http://mda.org), [als-mda.org](http://als-mda.org), and [mdaenespanol.org/](http://mdaenespanol.org/)
- Online support network and e-community, [mda.org/MyMDA](http://mda.org/MyMDA)
- Support groups, educational seminars, and conferences

Even with the changes, our service program remains the most comprehensive of any national health organization; and, our cutting-edge research program is stronger than ever. It continues to include MDA's clinical research training grant program, extensive basic science, clinical research and translational research funding focused on moving promising therapeutics from the lab into human clinical trials as quickly as possible. This year our research budget of \$42 million includes support for more than 330 projects worldwide, as well as MDA's Clinical Research Networks, a pilot program to accelerate clinical research and trials. In addition, we'll be building the first nationwide neuromuscular disease patient registry through our clinic network infrastructure. Data collected will allow physicians, researchers and the pharmaceutical industry to gain a better understanding of the course of neuromuscular diseases and accelerate the development of new therapies.

We continue to be grateful to the American public, as well as our devoted donors, sponsors and volunteers whose generosity helps make all our programs possible. You have our deepest appreciation for your understanding and support at this very difficult time.

Sincerely,



Gerald C. Weinberg  
President & CEO

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