

Health Bulletin



MS LifeLines® Offers Educational Resources And Award-Winning Call Center To The Multiple Sclerosis Community

(NAPSA)—Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and is the most common, nontraumatic, disabling neurological disease in young adults. It is estimated that approximately 2 million people have MS worldwide. Relapsing forms of MS are the most common, and can cause blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the limbs, and problems with strength and coordination.

MS LifeLines® is an educational support service committed to the MS community in the United States, sponsored by EMD Serono, Inc. and Pfizer Inc. Its mission is to offer support to people with MS and the caregivers. Launched in 2002, MS LifeLines continues connecting with the MS community, listening to its needs and delivering individualized support to people living with MS and their families 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The website, www.ms lifelines.com, provides information on living well with MS.

Kathy H., a caregiver and MS LifeLines Ambassador, suggests MS LifeLines as a resource for patients and caregivers living with MS, especially those who don't have family nearby. "Their website has great information, which is especially helpful for people who don't have access to support groups or who may not be ready to go to a support group meeting," said Kathy.

At the heart of the MS LifeLines network is its call center, which has answered nearly 1.5 million in-bound calls to date. The J.D. Power and Associates Call Center ProgramSM recently recognized the MS LifeLines call center for providing an "Outstanding Customer Service Experience." This is the second consecutive year J.D. Power and Associates has recognized MS LifeLines with this certification.



Kathy and Gary help people with MS connect.

The call center includes patient enrollment and support specialists who reach out to newly diagnosed patients; nurse support specialists who provide education and training for living with MS; and reimbursement specialists who can answer questions about financial assistance. Collectively, these specialists have helped nearly 200,000 patients. Whenever someone in the MS community needs to speak with a live person, support is available toll-free at 1-877-447-3243.

Kathy's husband, Gary H., who is also an MS LifeLines Ambassador, is a patient living with relapsing MS. He participates in the MS LifeLines Peer Connection program that connects people living with MS, or their caregivers, to talk about their concerns and fears with someone who understands. "I participate in the Peer Connection program because I love helping others, but sometimes I feel like I get more from the people I talk to than they might get from me," Gary said.

The MS LifeLines call center is central in providing individualized support and resources to the MS community and connecting callers to the Peer Connection pro-

gram and other various programs including:

•**Nurse Network:** MS LifeLines field nurses are MS certified. They are trained in the specialty of MS and certified by the International Organization of Multiple Sclerosis Nurses. They are available to conduct in-home injection training across the United States. More than 120,000 patients have been helped by MS LifeLines nurses since the program began.

•**MS LifeLines Ambassadors:** EMD Serono and Pfizer recognize it can sometimes help to talk with someone about what it's like living with relapsing MS. MS LifeLines Ambassadors are individuals living with relapsing MS who share their stories with others in the community.

•**Local Patient Programs:** Thousands of local patient programs are conducted each year around the country to help people impacted by relapsing MS stay informed and connected with the MS community in their area. These local events feature informative talks with health care professionals and inspiring stories from MS LifeLines Ambassadors.

•**Talk MS:** Talk MS is an online talk show series that features a variety of guests, including health care professionals, nurses and people living with relapsing MS.

MS LifeLines also offers access to reimbursement specialists who can assist patients in understanding their insurance benefits and available financial support programs for eligible patients.

For more information on MS and MS LifeLines, visit mslifelines.com or call toll-free at 1-877-447-3243. For J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Call Center Certification ProgramSM information, visit www.jdpower.com.