



AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF CANADA

ALS RESEARCH

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCLÉROSE LATÉRALE AMYOTROPHIQUE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION #10 • GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ALS & THE ALS SOCIETY OF CANADA

ALS RESEARCH FUNDING GROWS FOR 2000 AND BEYOND RESEARCH FUNDING IS OUR BEST HOPE

In 1999 the ALS Research Fund reached \$938,315 and a further \$250,000 was contributed to the newly formed Neuromuscular Research Partnership (NRP) Fund. This great achievement was made possible by the generosity of thousands of donors nation-wide and the diligent fundraising activities in our regional Units.

Also, in the latter half of 1999 and early 2000, over \$700,000 has been placed in the Tim E. Noël Endowment Fund to ensure an increase in research funding in the future.

The NRP is a collaborative initiative with the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada (MDAC) assisted by the Medical Research Council, now the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The NRP ran the first competition this June. Over 1 million dollars has been allocated to neuromuscular research from this joint venture.

Later this year, the ALS Society will contribute a further \$400,000 to \$500,000 to support the 2001 NRP research competition – one that is expected to fund over 2 million dollars of neuromuscular research.

Stable multi-year funding into ALS research is now possible – giving our skilled, internationally recognized investigators the resources they need to tackle the puzzle of ALS with the hope of finding a cure.

In two years the ALS Society has built and stabilized the ALS Research Fund so that it can respond to the urgent need for long-term support of excellent and relevant research directed to treatments and a cure for this devastating disease.

“I am extremely excited,” said Dr Tessa Gordon of the neuroscience division of the University of Alberta and a member of the NRP.

“Finally ALS research has steady funding that will enable our researchers to search diligently for answers to the questions this disease poses. Our ALS Society partnership with MDAC and CIHR will ensure that we have larger pools of money for ALS research in the future.”

Research funded during this stabilization period from July 1998 to July 2000 amounted to \$685,500.

While the ALS Society of Canada greatly appreciates the federal government’s increase in medical research funding and the creation in 2000 of the CIHR, there needs to be more research funding directed at finding a cure for neuro-degenerative diseases.

The creation of the CIHR and the commitment of the government to research-led innovation is a breakthrough for the thousands of Canadians affected by ALS.

At present there is no cure for ALS, and no treatment that significantly decreases symptoms or prolongs life. Breakthroughs are, however, being made and scientists believe these will have a significant impact on treatment in the next five years. Canadian scientists in Montreal, London, Toronto, and Vancouver are international leaders in ALS research.

Nevertheless, funding for ALS research lags well behind that for other similar diseases.

Ensure the CIHR recognizes the urgency for funding ALS research now. We are at a threshold; the injection of significant research funds now can result in more breakthroughs for this devastating disease in the next five years.

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