



Media Backgrounder – MS Clinical Trial

Multiple Sclerosis is a neurological disease in which the communication ability of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord is impaired or destroyed. An estimated 3,500 people in Saskatchewan have MS. Canada's MS prevalence rate is among the highest in the world at 240 per 100,000 people. In the prairies, the rate is 340 per 100,000 people.

Albany Medical Centre Research Team

Lead researcher Dr. Gary Siskin is a vascular and interventional radiologist at Albany Medical Centre in Albany, New York. His clinical trial will be the largest "double blind" study to date of angioplasty as a treatment for MS patients. Half of those participating will receive the procedure and half will not, to ensure reliable, scientific conclusions can be reached from the data results.

Eighty-six Saskatchewan patients are expected to be included in the two-year study, which will involve 130 patients. The research study proposal has received conditional approval from the FDA to begin trials immediately.

Application Process

Patients interested in volunteering may submit an application until February 24, 2012 online at www.health.gov.sk.ca/ms-clinical-trial or by calling (toll-free) **1-855-690-9901**. Applications will be randomly drawn to ensure all applicants have an equal chance to participate. Those selected will be contacted by phone and begin a screening process to ensure they meet eligibility requirements. This includes an in-person assessment by a neurologist in Regina. Patients who are eligible will travel to Albany at no cost to them. They will have periodic follow-up appointments in Regina following entry into the research study at no cost to them.

Saskatchewan MS Research Initiatives - Chronology

October 2010 - Saskatchewan becomes the first province in Canada to commit funding for research into the Liberation Therapy's effectiveness in treating MS symptoms. Five million dollars is committed to initiate and facilitate research through a partnership with the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF).

December 2010 – SHRF names a panel of expert advisors to oversee a call for research proposals to conduct clinical trials in Saskatchewan.

January – June 2011 - Other provinces announce initiatives to create MS patient registries or databases on those who have received the treatment.

June 2011 – SHRF's expert panel concludes that a suitable research proposal was not received.

July 2011 - The federal government announces that the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) will proceed with early-stage pan-Canadian research into the Liberation Therapy.

September 2011 – Saskatchewan announces a partnership with Albany Medical Centre that will enable Saskatchewan patients to participate in a clinical trial.

November 2011 – CIHR issues a Request for Proposals for research into Phase I/Phase II clinical trials.

January 2012 – Applications open for Saskatchewan patients to volunteer for the clinical trial.

February 24, 2012 – Application deadline.