



The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) offers a comprehensive range of services to millions of people with any of 43 neuromuscular diseases. It is unique among voluntary health agencies because it funds worldwide research as well as education programs, all without seeking or receiving government grants or fees from those it serves. In fact, the American Medical Association has recognized Jerry Lewis and the Muscular Dystrophy Association with Lifetime Achievement Awards “for significant and lasting contributions to the health and welfare of humanity.”

What Is Muscular Dystrophy?

There is no single disease called muscular dystrophy; the term designates a group of 43 muscle-destroying disorders, which vary in hereditary pattern, age of onset, initial muscles attacked and rate of progression. In the past decade, MDA-funded scientists have discovered nearly all the genes that, when defective, lead to specific neuromuscular disorders.

How Does MDA Make a Difference?

As the country’s largest private-sector sponsor of neuromuscular disease research, MDA spends \$30 million annually funding 400 scientific projects worldwide. The Association is on the threshold of delivering treatments and cures for several muscle-wasting disorders and have pioneered breakthroughs that may lead to therapies for heart disease, cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer’s, Huntington’s, Parkinson’s and cystic fibrosis. Nearly one million Americans with neuromuscular diseases are diagnosed and treated at over 235 hospital-affiliated clinics and 37 ALS research and clinical centers across the country through MDA’s unparalleled program of medical and support services.

Ranked Among 25 Most Efficient Major U.S. Charities

Money magazine's annual cost-efficiency review (10/96) of nonprofit organizations ranked the Muscular Dystrophy Association among the nation's top charities and a leader of the country's 25 largest charities in percentage of income received from the public. Ninety-five percent of MDA's income comes from individual or corporate contributors like the Harley-Davidson family of dealers, customers and employees. Over 76 cents of every dollar it raises is spent on direct program services. MDA raises money, provides patient and community services, and conducts widespread professional and public health education programs. Surprisingly, only about one-third of the association's income is raised through pledges to the annual "Jerry Lewis Telethon."

Does Your Fundraiser Make a Difference?

Absolutely, every dollar counts! In addition to research and education, in conjunction with the medical care received at local clinics, the 185 chapters of MDA provide many other direct services such as transportation assistance, orthopedic aids and sponsoring recreation at MDA summer camps.