

Dear Bike to the Bay Participant:

Thank you in advance for helping us promote the ***Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride***. Most media outlets have the greatest interest in reporting about local residents and their endeavors. Through this rider media relations program, we are asking you to turn the spotlight onto your own efforts by giving your local media an engaging local story to report – yours.

By promoting yourself and/or your team, you are not only raising awareness about ***Bike MS: Bike to the Bay*** but also raising awareness about multiple sclerosis. Raising awareness is the first step to making a difference. Plus local media coverage could assist you with your fundraising as well, as people in YOUR area will see your story and want to help. **For team captains**, media coverage can also assist with recruitment, as local stories can help your team gain additional exposure.

Your Role

Your role would be to contact your local media and discuss what makes your story unique, what inspired you to ride and what this event means to you. **For team captains**, also mention what makes your team special, team accomplishments and what inspired you to start a team. We provide you with all of the materials you need to “pitch” a story about your fundraising efforts and ***Bike MS: Bike to the Bay*** to your local media. Consider this document an express course in media relations. In addition, our communications department is available to you as needed to support your effort, brainstorm ideas and offer solutions. Contact Kerry McKenzie, our Marketing Manager at kerry.mckenzie@nmss.org or by calling 267-765-5110.

Your Story

In this packet, you will find some documents to support your efforts: a **press release**, **fact sheet** and a **pitch letter**. The press release and fact sheets are to accompany your **pitch letter** when doing your personal media outreach. The pitch letter needs to be personalized by you. Throughout the letter, you will find sections in *italics* that have been purposefully left blank for you to fill in your own relevant details. Please remember that these documents were written in a general way, so you will need to personalize them. Use these documents as a starting point, and feel free to be as creative as you desire in making them relevant to your efforts and your life. The more you are willing to share about your experience and motivation, the more interesting your story becomes and the more likely it will be picked up by the media outlet.

Your Materials

The **press release** and **fact sheet** are your basic vehicles for providing information about the event. The **pitch letter** is more personal; it introduces you and your story to the editor or reporter. It is shorter than the press release, because it does not need to provide as much detail about the event, the organization or even your team. Consider the pitch letter your cover letter to be sent out with your press release or fact sheet. The goal of the pitch letter is to quickly tell your story and explain why it would be an engaging article/segment for the editor/reporter’s readers/viewers/listeners.

Your Media List

You know what you and your neighbors are reading, listening to and watching. Most communities have a small, local paper which comes out weekly (called a Weekly). Many also rely upon a regional newspaper that comes out daily (called a Daily) for regional news. Many communities also enjoy a community access cable television station, and some even have a local radio station. Your community’s Daily, Weekly, TV station and radio station make up your local media.

The Chapter staff will handle major media, such as the dominant market newspapers, radio stations and television affiliates through our office.

Who to Contact

At each newspaper, you will want to focus on telling your story to the health, features or local editor or reporter. Many Weekly newspapers only have one editor. When that is the case, he or she is your contact. For broadcast media such as radio or TV, you should seek the assignment or planning editor. Once in a while, a small station may have a health editor, but that is unusual.

We suggest you compile a “media list” complete with your local publications, the name of your contacts (editors/reporters) and their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. There may be multiple people you want to “pitch” at each media outlet. That is fine; however, you can only pitch one of them at a time. If one says, “no” to you, you might ask him or her if there is someone else at their paper or station whom they think might be more interested in your story. It is also fine at that point to try another person at the paper.

I’ve Got My Documents and My Media List, Now What?

Now comes the fun part – pitching your story to the local media. Making a personal connection is always the best way to sell your story. You can begin by emailing your pitch letter and press release. The most effective way to do this is to paste your pitch letter into the body of your email and attach your press release. If you participated in the event last year, you could also send a photo. A day or two after you’ve sent out your information, you can follow up with a telephone call to try to “sell” your story to the editor/reporter. It is not unusual for a reporter or editor to “forget” about receiving your materials. If this happens, simply offer to re-send your materials.

Timing

Your timing depends entirely upon you and/or your team’s plans for your fundraising and training efforts. Think about what you are doing to fundraise and plan your media relations around your effort. If you are simply pulling together members to attend on Bike to the Bay weekend, you can pitch your story anytime up to two weeks before the event (the earlier the better). If you are planning additional fundraising activities, it could make your story more interesting and help with your event to time your media relations around those activities.

Examples

Any little extra thing you might be doing that is aiding your fundraising efforts for Bike to the Bay, or the MS Society, would be something to pitch to the people on your new media list.

- Is your reason for riding personal? Riding for a family member or a close friend? Make sure to check with them before sending your pitch.
- If you have goal or a mission, share that with the media.
- Hosting a group riding skills class or a neighborhood bike ride, why not invite the reporter to attend, take some photos, and write about how you’re preparing for Bike to the Bay? Maybe even invite them to join the ride.
- Local company sponsoring you or your team?
- Riding for a specific goal or purpose, like getting back in shape?
- Hosting a fundraising event, like a golf tournament, picnic where your boss will be in a dunk tank or a cycle-a-thon in your building lobby?

Please feel free to contact our chapter staff with any questions or to clarify any of this information. Thank you in advance for your help with promoting **Bike to the Bay!**

Dear **[Name of Editor/Reporter]:**

On Saturday and Sunday, September 10-11, I will join 1,500 cyclists to participate in Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride. My **[# of miles you will be riding]**-mile ride begins at **[your start location]** and concludes at the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach, DE. The Ride benefits the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

[Try to write an entire paragraph about why this event is meaningful to you and your personal connection to MS and/or Bike to the Bay. For team captains, mention why you started the team and what makes your team unique.]

I would be thrilled to talk to you about why I chose to participate in this event as a **[rider or Team Captain]** and share my personal story with you. I can call you in several days to provide you with more information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at **[your phone number]** or email me at **[your email address]**.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kerry McKenzie, Marketing
Manager, National MS Society
267-765-5110, kerry.mckenzie@nmss.org

Thousands of Cyclists Will Ride Toward a World Free of MS at Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride on September 10-11

NEWARK, DE— Nearly 1,500 cyclists are expected to raise almost \$1 million to stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever at Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride taking place on September 10-11 in Delaware. Bike MS, hosted by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, is the premier fundraising cycling series locally and across in the U.S. for anyone seeking a personal challenge and a world free of multiple sclerosis. All participants have access to bike mechanics, support vehicles, catered rest stops, a finish line celebration and much more.

Attracting nearly 100,000 participants nationwide each year with more than 85 Bike MS rides taking place across the country, anyone anywhere can accept the challenge and fuel progress to help create a world free of MS. The largest fundraising cycling series in the country, Bike MS includes people living with MS, their friends, families and neighbors, as well as corporate teams and individuals who are driven to support critical research and life-changing services to help people with MS live their best lives. People living with MS can also participate in "I Ride with MS," a special program recognizing Bike MS cyclists living with the disease.

Bike MS: Bike to the Bay cyclists must raise a minimum of \$300 to participate in the ride, with many raising hundreds or thousands of dollars more.

Bike MS is sponsored nationally by Premier National Sponsors Primal and Bicycling Magazine, as well as Sanofi Genzyme, True Fitness, Kenda Tires, Topeak, Showers Pass, and People for Bikes. Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride is locally presented by Discover Bank. Local bike shop sponsors include Bike Line and Wooden Wheels Bike Shop.

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday, September 10-11. The main starting line is DelTech Terry Campus in Dover, DE. The Ride kicks off at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday.

Cyclists can choose from six different routes:

- >One-day, 20-mile
- >One-day, 50-mile
- >One-day, 75-mile
- >One-day, 100-mile
- >Two-day, 75 miles each day
- >Two-day, 75 miles each day, plus an extra 25-mile loop on Saturday

PARTICIPATION/ VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION: Visit bikeMS.org, call 1-800-445-BIKE or email mscycling@pae.nmss.org.

WHY: Proceeds raised will support cutting-edge MS research, and life-changing services for people living with MS so they can live their best lives.

HASHTAGS: #bikeMS #BikeToTheBayDE and #DontJustRide

About Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.



Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are leading to better understanding and moving us closer to a world free of MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with at least two to three times more women than men being diagnosed with the disease. MS affects more than 2.3 million worldwide.

About the National MS Society

The Society mobilizes people and resources so that everyone affected by multiple sclerosis can live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever.

To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward. Last year alone, through our comprehensive nationwide network, the Society devoted \$122.2 million to help more than one million individuals connect to the people, information and resources they need. To move closer to a world free of MS, the Society also invested \$54 million to support more than 380 new and ongoing research projects around the world.

Early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can make a difference for people with multiple sclerosis. Learn about your options by talking to your health care professional and contacting the National MS Society at nationalMSSociety.org or 1-800-344-4867.

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Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride 2016 Fact Sheet

WHAT: The 33rd annual Bike MS: Bike to the Bay Ride presented locally by Discover Bank is organized by the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

WHO: Nearly 1,500 cyclists and over 200 volunteers from the Greater Delaware Valley region and across the U.S. will gather to help create a world free of multiple sclerosis. With routes from 25 to 175 miles, the Ride offers something for everyone and all skill levels.

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday, September 10 & 11, 2016. 75- and 100-mile route options begin in Dover, DE at 7:00 a.m.; 50-mile route option begins in Felton, DE at 11:00 a.m.; and the 20-mile route option begins in Milton, DE at 1:00 p.m. Start times are subject to change, please check the website for details.

WHERE: Main starting location: DelTech Terry Campus - 100 Campus Drive, Dover, DE 19904. Cyclists ride to the Seashore State Park South Inlet Lot at the Indian River Inlet (near Rehoboth, DE) on Saturday, where they enjoy a post-ride celebration. Two-day cyclists complete a return trip for the final finish line celebration at DelTech Terry Campus on Sunday. **Other starts:** Felton, DE (50-mile) and Milton, DE (20-mile)

WHY: Our cyclists and volunteers are united in a single goal: creating a world free of MS. Bike to the Bay Ride is expected to raise nearly \$1 million this year. The funds raised through the Ride are critical to supporting vital services, programs and research for people living with multiple sclerosis.

DETAILS: Visit bikeMS.org or call 1-800-445-BIKE

HOW TO REGISTER: Visit www.bikeMS.org or call 1-800-445-BIKE. Cyclists must raise a minimum of \$300 in donations to participate.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Kerry McKenzie (kerry.mckenzie@nmss.org) 267-765-5110



Bike MS Fact Sheet

About Bike MS

For cyclists and all those seeking a personal challenge and a world free of MS, Bike MS is the premier fundraising cycling series in the nation. With more than 85 events across the U.S., Bike MS is more than a ride. It's an experience grounded in camaraderie and marked by passion, inspiration, determination and pure enjoyment.

- Established in 1980, Bike MS is the largest organized cycling series in the country.
- Last year, cyclists raised nearly \$83 million to support cutting-edge MS research and life-changing services to help people with MS live their best lives.
- Each ride in the Bike MS series offers unique local flavor, while maintaining a well-organized, fully-supported, and consistently extraordinary experience, including access to bike mechanics, support vehicles, rest stops, a finish line celebration, and much more.
- The National MS Society offers fundraising and training assistance to participants, as well as a high level of safety and support throughout the ride.
- Bike MS brings individuals and teams together to conquer a challenge and share an unforgettable experience with friends, family and co-workers, all while making a difference in the lives of people affected by MS.
- Event hashtags: #bikeMS and #DontJustRide
- Visit www.bikeMS.org for additional information.

About Corporate Bike Teams

- There are more than 3,000 corporate bike teams across the country.
- More than 110 companies have teams participating in multiple rides across the country, which elevates them to National Team status.
- The average number of riders per corporate team is 10.
- The top national team, BP America, raised over \$1 million last year.
- Corporate Bike teams generated more than \$35 million last year.
- The challenge and camaraderie created by Bike MS makes it the team-building event of choice for corporations and organizations.

About our Cyclists

- Nearly 100,000 people ride each year, from corporate leaders, to people with MS, to friends and neighbors. These cyclists secure pledges from more than two million contributors.
- Nearly 65 percent of Bike MS participants are male. Sixty percent of riders are aged 25-44.
- Since the series began as one ride in Minnesota in 1980, cyclists have raised more than \$1 billion to create a world free of MS.
- Eighty percent of Bike MS cyclists ride on friends & family or corporate teams.

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- Early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can make a difference for people with multiple sclerosis. Learn about your options by talking to your health care professional and contacting the National MS Society at www.nationalMSSociety.org or 1-800-344-4867.

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- Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with at least two to three times more women than men being diagnosed with the disease.
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