

# TODAY IS WORLD MS DAY

Dear Friend,

St. Michael's Hospital is already a world leader in multiple sclerosis and home to the largest MS clinic in North America. But did you know that we're about to revolutionize the care experience for MS patients?

Thanks to our relentless community of donors who helped us meet an incredible \$42M fundraising goal, we are set to open the doors to our state-of-the-art BARLO MS Centre, this summer. To mark World MS Day, please [enjoy a sneak peek](#) of the evolution from when it started in 1982 to opening the new centre and some insights from one of its newest specialists, neurologist Dr. Raphael Schneider. Here's to meeting our next goal: stopping MS in its tracks.

Sincerely,



Lili Litwin,  
President, St. Michael's Hospital Foundation

## ST. MIKE'S A "LIFELINE" FOR MS PATIENT

Karen Jacoby's healing journey began with her first visit to the MS clinic at St. Michael's Hospital. "My diagnosis was life-changing. MS is unpredictable, episodic and progressive, and there is no cure. It would be easy to give up, but my health-care professionals were determined to manage this disease and not have it define me."



One year after her diagnosis, Karen's quality of life has improved and she's even one number lower on her disability scale. "Now part of my extended family, St. Mike's is a lifeline to educational tools, exceptional treatment and mental health support."

## 5 QUESTIONS FOR AN MS NEUROLOGIST

Dr. Raphael Schneider is a St. Michael's neurologist who began working with our MS team in July 2020. In anticipation of the new BARLO MS Centre opening, Dr. Schneider told us what excites him about his research, the new centre and the future of MS care.



### What made you want to join the BARLO MS Centre?

One of the main reasons was to work with Dr. Jiwon Oh, who had established several important projects to study progression in MS. Her expertise is in medical imaging and mine is in immunology, and I saw ample opportunity to work together.

### What is the focus of your research?

My group is working toward establishing tests to determine a patient's prognosis. Since the immune system plays a key role in MS, we measure immune cell activity in patients' blood and spinal fluid.

### What can this reveal about MS progression?

We hope to establish biomarkers to tell us whether a person with MS will be likely to develop severe symptoms. Since we now have many disease-modifying therapies available, blood and spinal fluid biomarkers could soon be used to tailor treatment to an individual's needs.

### What else are you excited about right now?

The recent success of RNA vaccines for COVID shows how potent these molecules are. In the laboratory, we now measure thousands of RNAs in cells from people with MS. We believe this will eventually provide a means to understand their MS better.

### Are you optimistic about our potential to develop treatments to defeat MS?

Yes. Over the last few years, there has been tremendous progress in our understanding of MS therapies. We're diagnosing MS earlier, which means we can start treatment earlier, which can improve long-term outcomes and quality of life. At the BARLO, we'll be able to provide more comprehensive and multidisciplinary care. I think patients appreciate that we're moving toward a more holistic approach. Research will be a top priority, and with many patients participating in studies, I believe the BARLO will become the world's top MS research centre.

## DID YOU KNOW?

1. St. Michael's is a major centre for MS research and care — the largest in North America.
2. The new centre is designed for integrated patient care and includes a gym, a cognitive lab and an independent living lab.
3. Our MS patient registry provides a rich source of information for researchers around the world: it has already captured data on 5,400 patients, and facilitated many studies.
4. Medical Director Dr. Jiwon Oh is using advanced imaging techniques to explore the impact of MS on spinal cord tissue and predict who may be diagnosed with MS, even before symptoms appear.
5. The MS team includes over two dozen physicians, scientists, nurses and administrators, a number that will increase as the patient base grows.

## STAY CONNECTED

Visit our [COVID-19 information page](#) for regular updates on how St. Michael's is responding to COVID-19, and follow our social channels below.



STMICHAELSFUNDATION.COM

30 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario,  
M5B 1W8, Canada | 416.864.5000  
Charitable Registration: #122963663RR0001  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)