

# November 2022 Newsletter



## Building an Unstoppable Team

A board of directors is a body of elected or appointed members who, together with the CEO, oversee the activities of an organization. An effective decision-making board can strengthen a nonprofit organization in many different ways. It can oversee strategy and tactics, perform some of the tasks of the organization, support the organization's work in its community, bring necessary resources for better performance, advise the organization on financial, legal or other matters and help with fund raising. At ACP, we are blessed with a board that matches these ideals, and then some. Our Board consists of a diverse group of 8 generous people with different educational backgrounds and areas of expertise, each of whom cares deeply about accelerating MS research. Together, they form the backbone of ACP.



ACP's initiatives are strategic tools for accelerating MS research. The ACP Repository is a collection of thousands of biosamples and associated data that also has millions of returned



data points deposited for the benefit of all researchers. It is a rich resource that is readily available to help scientists determine the biological underpinnings of the disease. iConquerMS engages people with MS and their loved ones to participate in research by sharing their health information, completing questionnaires on a

variety of subjects and connecting with researchers by an online portal. This powerful initiative adds a vibrancy to MS research by infusing it with the perspectives of those affected by the disease and focusing studies on topics that matter most to them.

We, at ACP, believe that research is the only way to greatly improve the outlook for people with MS and one day find a cure. Data collection and sharing are key in the research process. ACP's programs catalyze MS research by inexpensively providing the "raw materials" scientists need to explore their ideas quickly. We promote open access principles so that information flows freely to those who can optimize its impact. An effort of this magnitude requires a variety of skills, including strategic planning, marketing proficiency, financial wisdom and legal expertise. ACP's leadership is up to the task.



**Linda Kanner** has served on the ACP Board for the past 15 years and held the position of Board Chair from 2019 - 2022. She is a retired entrepreneur and a communications/marketing professional with expertise in new product development and sales management. She has broad experience building businesses and managing both start-up businesses as well as large corporations. She shares, "I have MS and my uncle had debilitating MS. I was introduced to ACP when I was diagnosed and was intrigued by the vision to cure MS through collaboration between patients and doctors... I am an entrepreneur and am excited to bring "newness" to this fight. The vision of iConquerMS speaks to me... I have great respect for the research community and feel that supporting the best MS academic researchers is likely to bring results. I have children and grandchildren who carry my MS genes and I want this disease to be cured!"



**Michael Middlebrook** joined the ACP Board in 2020. He is an investment analyst with a background in healthcare management consulting and investing. In his words, "The ACP Board is a talented and diverse group of individuals from a range of backgrounds that are all committed to accelerating a cure for MS. It's an energized group that's focused on increasing ACP's awareness and maximizing its impact on the MS research community... I often think about the financials of ACP, how we can effectively support large research organizations in a way that supports our (and their) internal financial requirements so we can continue to grow ACP and our

partners' impact and reach... ACP has the opportunity to create research assets that can be shared among for-profit and non-profit pharmaceutical, medical device and research institutions - it's uniquely positioned to support and spur research in a way that most other healthcare research institutions aren't able to.”



**Patrick Curley** joined the ACP Board 6 years ago and serves as the current Board Chair. He has a vast amount of legal expertise as a Certified Elder Law Attorney, whose law practice focuses on helping seniors and those with special needs, including those with chronic illnesses like MS. As a small business owner, he is well versed at leveraging and maximizing what can be accomplished as an organization with limited resources. According to Patrick, “My legal background helps me with analyzing complex information and developing strategies. When I learned about ACP, I immediately knew that I wanted to serve its mission. ACP is doing something no one else is. Its biorepository is accelerating research towards better treatments and a cure, while iConquerMS offers a vigorous community, both nationally and internationally, for people affected by MS to work together with researchers and pharmaceutical companies to truly target research to the needs of our community. I am very excited by the combined potential of these initiatives to push scientific achievement toward improved treatments and, ultimately, a cure for those living with MS... I have been very active in scouting with my son and am an Eagle Scout myself. One of the core elements of scouting is doing good for others and doing your best. I try to bring that same mindset to ACP.”

ACP’s Leadership is also rich with scientific expertise.

**Aakruti Sangeev** is one of the newest members of the ACP Board.

She brings to the table years of experience working in the pharmaceutical industry as a scientist and project manager in Neuroscience and Oncology. She is currently the Director of Program Management at a Biotech company. She shares, “Neuroscience is near and dear to my heart and I feel honored that I get to utilize my skills and knowledge to better serve the MS community.”





**Peter Riskind** has served on the Board since 2016. He is a retired neurologist that cared for people with MS for more than 30 years. He founded and directed the MS Center at UMass Memorial Medical Center and also conducted MS research as a Professor of Neurology at UMass Medical School. He was an original site Principal Investigator for the ACP Repository. When asked why he serves on the Board, Peter states, “I am excited by the unique approach that

ACP (and now also iConquerMS) has taken to accelerate MS research and to include viewpoints that were not being recognized adequately before. I feel strongly that ACP can make major contributions to MS research and to the MS-community and I am honored to play a small role in this effort.”

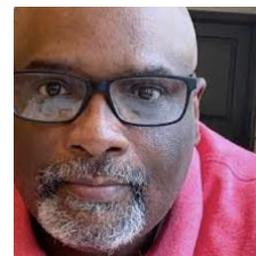
New to the Board this year, **Deepak Grover** is a data scientist with previous experience working in the MS realm in the pharmaceutical industry. His knowledge and skills are instrumental in leveraging the wealth of information in the Repository and iConquerMS databases for the most impact, among other things. In his words, “I have been a manager



and group head in my professional career where I have had opportunity to initiate, manage and run programs to fulfill the mission of the organization. There is no question that collaboration across and between industry and academia, and enhanced availability of scientific data and biological samples will accelerate the path for getting an effective cure. It is truly heartwarming to see ACP is actively engaged in that direction.”

Fewer than 10 percent of people enrolled in clinical trials today are minorities. Diversity in MS research is vital to ensure that its findings apply to and benefit everyone living with the disease. In March, the ACP Board welcomed an individual that is well equipped to help drive these efforts forward. **Jerry Kinard** has worked in drug development for more than a decade. He is deeply involved in engaging with people affected by diseases and understands how to bring them into the research space. Jerry states, “I am passionate about clinical research and how critical it is to get drugs to the market for patients who need them. I have

worked in various therapeutic areas monitoring and managing clinical trials for several pharmaceutical companies. I believe I bring a unique skill set through my understanding of the clinical



research enterprise... I know as a leader that decisions are often made at the top that influence peoples' lives that look like me (African American). I would like to bring my lived experience and my research experience to the Board where I believe I can help bring value particularly as we seek to find treatments for diverse populations."

In order for ACP to advance its mission, it is imperative to spread the word about the important work that we're doing. Another recent addition to the ACP Board has the knowledge and skills to help us tell our story. **Kristy DosReis** is a professional communicator and collaborator for both public offices and non-profit organizations. She



specializes in taking complex information and making it understandable. In her words, "I understand the importance of clarity and passion when trying to reach and inspire audiences. As an individual diagnosed with MS in 2010, I face the challenges of this disease every day. I'd like to have an active role in the fight to accelerate MS research and, one day, a cure."

ACP is strategically building a robust board that has the expertise that's needed to move ACP and MS research toward a cure. Its membership includes a mix of old and new voices – individuals that have served for many years and new members with fresh perspectives. ACP's leadership includes people with MS that not only understand the disease's impact, but also the needs and priorities of the MS community, which is what our vision and mission is wholly centered on. All share a commitment and passion for research, a desire to lead and be a part of something bigger. With these individuals at the helm, ACP is well poised in its mission. We thank each of them for their service and look forward to what the future holds!

