

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Accessible Technology Can Offer Customizable Solutions to People with MS**

*Berlex, Microsoft, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Embark on  
Landmark Collaboration to Help People with MS Maintain Their Health and Stay Connected*

**NEW YORK, March 19, 2007** – In today’s fast-paced, digital environment, more people are embracing the technology that has revolutionized the way we conduct business, interact with our family and friends, and manage our households. For some people with multiple sclerosis (MS), technological advances may offer benefits, but they can also pose challenges. Due to some MS symptoms, everyday tasks such as seeing a blinking cursor on a computer screen, manipulating a mouse, or remembering when to take medication may prove difficult. Industry leaders think they may be able to change this.

Recognizing the advantages that technology can bring to people with MS, leaders from three specialty areas – pharmaceutical, technology, and patient advocacy – have come together to improve the way technology may help people with MS maintain their health and independence, have support for their life choices, and stay connected with their families, friends, and communities.

In this landmark alliance known as the MS Technology Collaborative, Berlex, Inc., a U.S. affiliate of Bayer Schering Pharma AG, Germany; Microsoft Corp.; and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society will work together to better understand the needs of people with MS and to help provide access to the technology and resources they need to stay connected to their communities and the world. A project steering committee comprised of people with MS from across the country will oversee these efforts to help ensure that the outcomes from the project truly address the unmet needs of the MS Community.

MS is an unpredictable neurological disease that affects an estimated 400,000 people in the United States. A new case is diagnosed every hour. Often, MS is diagnosed in people between the ages of 20 to 50. It can cause vision problems, tingling or numbness, trouble maintaining balance, fatigue or weakness, loss of coordination, problems with walking, or lapses in memory. These problems might be permanent, or they might come and go without warning. While there is no cure for MS, early and effective treatment is

an important component of helping to control its progression. One goal of the MS Technology Collaborative is to explore the ways in which effective treatment and the use of accessible technology can together enhance the lives of people with MS.

“Having MS means something different to each person with the disease, so we are especially excited to identify new and customizable solutions to help expand and simplify how people with MS stay connected to those around them,” said Joyce Nelson, President and CEO, National MS Society. “We want to help people with MS connect and move forward in the world in ways that support their individual needs – not the other way around.”

As a first step, the MS Technology Collaborative will conduct a survey of people with MS to understand how they use technology throughout their disease and in their professional and personal lives. By fully understanding how people with MS use technology, the MS Technology Collaborative aims to create a personalized, interactive, Web-based program that will deliver tailored information to each individual with MS. The survey will also explore how MS symptoms may have affected major decisions in their life.

“At Microsoft, we are dedicated to creating technology that adjusts to individuals’ needs as they change over the course of a day, a year, a lifespan – including those with MS or any other type of condition,” said Rob Sinclair, director of the Accessible Technology Group at Microsoft. “We believe that technology will help people with MS maximize their abilities, even as those abilities change.”

Another goal of the MS Technology Collaborative is to raise awareness of how existing technology can help fulfill personal and professional goals, showcasing how technology can flex to the changing needs of each person with MS. Altering screen settings on computers, using a trackball instead of a mouse, sending text messages to remind one when to take medication – all may help a person with MS navigate daily challenges.

Because MS is a highly variable and unpredictable disease and each person may experience a number of symptoms with varying degrees of severity and/or frequency, the MS Technology Collaborative will try to meet individualized needs by offering a robust, online portal of existing resources and information, including basic tips for selecting appropriate technology. For those not experiencing any symptoms related to their MS, the knowledge that there is a comprehensive resource with tips, testimonials and additional insights available to them may help mitigate their fears of what the future may hold.

“Multiple sclerosis and its impact on people’s lives needs to be fought on multiple fronts through effective treatment, comprehensive support systems, and practical technology tools,” said Dr. Ludger Heeck, vice president and general manager of Specialized Therapeutics at Berlex. “Berlex was the pioneer in providing effective drug therapy and comprehensive support programs to people with MS, which allows us to bring a deep and specialized understanding of MS to this project. By combining the strengths of each Collaborative member with the personalized perspective offered by the steering committee, we believe this unique approach will have a strong, positive impact for people living with MS.”

### **MS Technology Collaborative**

In addition to conducting a survey; creating a personalized, interactive, Web-based program; and developing an online resource of relevant MS information; the MS Technology Collaborative will issue a comprehensive report based on the survey results, with a focus on the role technology and connectivity plays in the lives of people with MS. The report will be widely distributed by all members of the MS Technology Collaborative and will be available on the group’s Web site at [www.MyMSMyWay.com](http://www.MyMSMyWay.com).

Individuals interested in participating in this landmark survey or those wanting periodic program updates can register for additional information at [www.MyMSMyWay.com](http://www.MyMSMyWay.com).

### **About the MS Technology Collaborative**

The MS Technology Collaborative's vision is to provide people with MS information resources and tools to create a connection between technology, community, and treatment options so they can stay connected to the world. The MS Technology Collaborative's membership includes Berlex, a pharmaceutical company that has been at the forefront of MS therapy development, starting with the introduction of the very first therapy for relapsing remitting MS and continuing with its innovative treatments in development today; Microsoft, a global technology leader; and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the largest MS research, service, and advocacy organization in the world.

### **About the Participating Organizations**

#### Berlex

Berlex, Inc. is a U.S. affiliate of Bayer Schering Pharma AG, Germany, which is a subsidiary of Bayer AG. Bayer AG is one of the world's leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Diabetes Care, and Pharmaceuticals divisions. The U.S. Pharmaceuticals division comprises the following business units: Women's Healthcare, Diagnostic Imaging, Specialized Therapeutics, Hematology/Cardiology, and Oncology. The company's aim is to discover and manufacture products that will improve human health worldwide, by diagnosing, preventing and treating diseases.

#### National Multiple Sclerosis Society

MS stops people from moving. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society exists to make sure it doesn't. We help each person address the challenges of living with MS, and through our 50 state network of chapters, we fund more MS research, provide more services to people with MS, offer more professional education and further more advocacy efforts than any other MS organization in the world. The Society is dedicated to achieving a world free of MS. We are people who want to do something about MS now. Join the movement at [nationalmssociety.org](http://nationalmssociety.org).

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis. Talk to your health care professional and contact the National Multiple Sclerosis Society at [nationalmssociety.org](http://nationalmssociety.org) or 1-800-344-4867 to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.

#### Microsoft Accessible Technology Group

For nearly 20 years, Microsoft has focused on developing accessible technology for everyone, including individuals who experience the world in different ways because of difficulties or disabilities. Accessible technology makes the computer more comfortable and easier to see, hear, and use. More information about accessibility and Microsoft can be found at [www.microsoft.com/enable/](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/).

#### Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq: MSFT) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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