

The Muscular Dystrophy Association Elects Renowned Medical Researcher and Scientist Donald S. Wood, PhD as President and CEO

Dr. Wood will launch next chapter of scientific discoveries and innovative medical services to continue to transform the lives of people with muscular dystrophy, ALS and related neuromuscular diseases

NEW YORK, NY, November 12, 2020 — The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) today announced it has elected [Donald S. Wood, PhD](#), as President and Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Wood previously was Vice Chairman of the Board for the MDA and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness at Odessa College, which is one of the top-performing community colleges in the nation.

Dr. Wood has been involved with the MDA for nearly 40 years, and most notably launched and managed the organization's Task Force on Genetics that led to the discovery of the gene that causes Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).



Introducing Dr. Donald S. Wood, President and CEO.

“Seventy years ago, the MDA funded research into the hereditary disorders of muscular dystrophy before anyone knew how normal muscle made you strong, or that it was defects to DNA that caused hereditary disorders,” said Dr. Wood. “Today, however, we are much more informed, and the MDA is again at the frontiers of science and medicine as we support research and advance client care into treatments, therapies and cures for

muscular dystrophy and related neuromuscular disorders like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD), Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT), and some 40 others. It is an honor and privilege to lead MDA's extraordinary team of doctors, scientists, advocates, volunteers, partners and fundraisers across our nation to fulfill our mission: to provide the research, innovative care, advocacy and supportive services to people and families living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and related neuromuscular diseases."

In total, Dr. Wood has more than four decades of experience leading both nonprofit and for-profit institutions. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, he served first as an executive and then as President and Chief Operating Officer of IntegraMedAmerica, Inc., a medical services provider, where he helped take the company public and operated the company's national network of reproductive science centers, driving profitability for 12 years without a single losing quarter. During this time, he also helped create a new genetic-testing company, Odyssey Biomedical, which was later sold to Integrated Genetics, a division of Genzyme.

Most recently, Dr. Wood served as Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness at Odessa College, where his work developing a Drop Rate Improvement Program is credited with dramatically improving student outcomes and helping to propel the college to national recognition for its high performance.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our world, forever changing the medical, science and nonprofit communities, it is critical we now reinforce our mission," said Steven J. Farella, chairman of the Board of the MDA. "With his more than 40-year history with the MDA, no one is better suited than Dr. Wood. Through his extensive work as a scientist, medical professional and business leader, Dr. Wood is well equipped to lead the MDA in its next chapter, continuing our important work on the front lines of accelerating research across neuromuscular diseases to bring more treatments and new cures to families."

Dr. Wood began his career in neuromuscular disease research at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, where he served as a National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral research fellow in neurology. He holds a doctorate in physiology from Washington State University.

Dr. Wood succeeds Lynn O'Connor Vos, who served as President and CEO of the MDA since 2017. "I am very proud of the contributions and achievements we have made at MDA over the past three years," said Vos. "With this foundation now set and the long-term strategy clearly paved I have determined that now is a good time for me to pass the baton and pursue new and different opportunities. We have always put mission first, investing in research, care and advocacy. I continue to believe deeply in the mission of

MDA and will always remain dedicated to our clinicians, partners, advocates and families in the pursuit of accelerating new treatments to achieve better health outcomes and bring equal opportunities to this significantly underserved community. It has been a privilege to work with all of you. Thank you for your ongoing support and guidance.”

About the [Muscular Dystrophy Association](#)

For 70 years, the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) has been committed to transforming the lives of people living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and related neuromuscular diseases. We do this through [innovations in science](#) and [innovations in care](#). As the largest source of funding for neuromuscular disease research outside of the federal government, MDA has committed more than \$1 billion since our inception to accelerate the discovery of therapies and cures. [Research we have supported](#) is directly linked to life-changing therapies across multiple neuromuscular diseases. [MDA's MOVR](#) is the first and only data hub that aggregates clinical, genetic, and patient-reported data for multiple neuromuscular diseases to improve health outcomes and accelerate drug development. MDA supports the [largest network of multidisciplinary clinics](#) providing best-in-class care at more than 150 of the nation's top medical institutions. Our [Resource Center](#) serves the community with one-on-one specialized support, and we offer educational conferences, events, and materials for families and healthcare providers. [MDA Advocacy](#) supports equal access for our community, and each year thousands of children and young adults learn vital life skills and gain independence at [summer camp](#) and through recreational programs, at no cost to families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MDA continues to produce virtual events and programming to support our community when in-person events and activities are not possible. MDA's COVID-19 guidelines and virtual events are posted at [mda.org/COVID19](#). For more information, visit [mda.org](#).