



Contacts:

Manish Raisinghani, MBBS, PhD
President
Target ALS Foundation Inc.
(908) 907-5670
manish.raisinghani@targetals.org

Roxan Triolo Olivas
MDA Vice President
Public Relations and Community Programs
(520) 529-5305
rolivas@mdausa.org

MDA and Target ALS Foundation Partner to Advance ALS Research and Therapy Development

Alliance Focuses On Supporting Promising, Young ALS Investigators

CHICAGO, September 28, 2016 – The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and Target ALS Foundation today announced a partnership aimed at advancing ALS research and therapy development. Through the alliance, the two organizations will work together to support talented, young scientists who choose to pursue a career devoted to ALS research.

The partnership represents a key step in the commitment by both Target ALS and MDA to form strategic alliances with for- and non-profit organizations. ALS is one of the neuromuscular diseases both organizations fight with a big-picture perspective on finding treatments and cures for people whose weakening physical strength and loss of mobility make the most basic daily activities extraordinarily challenging.

“MDA is strategic in our efforts to pursue collaborative partnerships, and we’re excited to align with Target ALS Foundation to advance our common goal of supporting the young ALS researchers today who will make the breakthroughs of tomorrow,” said MDA President and CEO Steven M. Derks. “By uniting and working together, we can make certain young scientists at this pivotal stage in their careers have all the resources necessary to advance their research, facilitate discovery, and make the greatest impact in the lives of individuals and families with ALS.”

MDA awards Development Grants to promising young post-doctoral fellows who are making the transition toward an independent academic career. These three-year awards are funded at \$60,000 per year and provide fellows with the support to craft and execute an independent research project which may propel their career to the next level.

Target ALS has launched core facilities that enable ALS researchers access to human postmortem tissue, human stem cells and viral vectors. Access to tissue and stem cells from human patients is critical to allow researchers to compare laboratory findings from culture or rodent models to the pathological mechanisms that occur in the human disease. As part of the collaborative effort to support young ALS investigators, Target ALS will extend access to its core facilities to MDA's development grantees focused on ALS research, allowing these individuals to advance their research projects and encouraging them to pursue careers within the ALS research field.

"Target ALS is pleased to partner with MDA to expand access of its core facilities to talented young ALS investigators. This partnership is an extension of our core mission to lower barriers for ALS research and ensure that critical tools are available to fast track the best ideas for development of ALS therapeutics" said Manish Raisinghani, MBBS, PhD, President of Target ALS Foundation Inc.

Importantly, the partnership will help to fill both the therapy development pipeline and the need for talented researchers in the ALS field.

About ALS

ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) is a disease of the parts of the central nervous system that control voluntary muscle movement. In ALS, motor neurons (nerve cells that control muscle cells) gradually lose function; the result is that the muscles they control become weak and then nonfunctional. ALS usually strikes in late middle age or later, although it also occurs in young adults and even in children, as well as in very elderly people. The causes of the vast majority of ALS cases are still unknown. Although the majority of cases of ALS are sporadic, meaning there is no family history of the disease, about 5 to 10 percent of cases are familial, meaning the disease runs in the family. Life expectancy typically is three to five years after diagnosis, and there is no cure.

About MDA

MDA is leading the fight to free individuals—and the families who love them—from the harm of muscular dystrophy, ALS and related muscle-debilitating diseases that take away physical strength, independence and life. We use our collective strength to help kids and adults live longer and grow stronger by finding research breakthroughs across diseases, caring for individuals from day one and

empowering families with services and support in hometowns across America. Learn how you can fund cures, find care and champion the cause at mda.org.

About Target ALS Foundation

Target ALS Foundation, Inc. (www.targetals.org) is a non-profit organization with the overall goal of accelerating development of new treatments for ALS. We drive emergence of novel ALS drug discovery programs in industry by funding collaborative consortia focused on development of novel therapeutic targets. To ensure that all new ideas get tested, we make essential tools and resources openly available to all — especially young investigators—with no embargo or strings attached.