

News Release

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## World MS Day 2018: Call for Greater Curiosity to Drive Understanding of the Disease and Future Innovation

- **Launch of #MSInsideOut campaign, aimed at providing a deeper understanding of multiple sclerosis (MS)**
- **Donation to the MS International Federation (MSIF)\* of up to € 20,000**
- **Shift.ms to Executive Produce a documentary to highlight stories and unique perspectives within the MS community**

Darmstadt, Germany, May 30, 2018 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today announced its support of World MS Day 2018 and MS International Federation (MSIF)'s #BringingUsCloser campaign through a new campaign, #MSInsideOut, to support the multiple sclerosis (MS) community and deepen understanding of the disease. The initiative will involve a collaboration with Shift.ms, the social network for people with MS, who will be Executive Producers on a new documentary, which will feature unique perspectives from the MS community. The documentary will premiere at the 34<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) in Berlin, Germany in October.

In addition, for every use of the hashtag #MSInsideOut on Twitter until June 8, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany will donate €1 (up to €20,000) towards [MSIF's research fellowship program](#) – to mark the Company's commitment to MS over the last two decades.

"To create further advances it is critical that we continuously ask questions, listen and learn," said Rehan Verjee, Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer at the Biopharma business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. "We are committed to



truly understanding MS from the inside-out, and more importantly, helping others do the same.”

“We are pleased to be working as Executive Producers on this new documentary in an effort to shine a light on the untold stories of MS,” said George Pepper, Co-founder and Director, Shift.ms. “In line with our broader mission at Shift.ms, the aim of this documentary is to highlight the positive stories of our members, as well as the elements of MS that still remain under-represented. We hope that by bringing these stories out in the open we will be able to address the challenges that remain and drive further innovation to tackle these barriers.”

For most people living with MS, a diagnosis occurs in the prime of their lives, ages 20-40<sup>1</sup>, and MS produces significant physical disability within 20 to 25 years in more than 30% of patients<sup>2</sup>. Despite advances in MS care, a deeper understanding of the unique challenges both patients and care partners face is needed.

Last year, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany announced the largest global MS care partner study to date in partnership with the International Alliance of Carer Organizations (IACO). Findings from previous research have shown that problems identified among care partners include anxiety, depression, insomnia and pain, along with concerns about the financial impact of MS for families<sup>3</sup>. These data, which will be published at ECTRIMS in Berlin, Germany, October 10–12, 2018, further demonstrate the need for a deeper understanding of those affected by MS and their care partners.

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a company celebrating its 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, has played an important role in innovation, as well as supporting the MS community more broadly, for more than two decades. Curiosity has always been the force that drives Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany and will continue to motivate the Company to apply its expertise in science and technology to achieve human progress.

In addition, today, MS in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, a Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany-sponsored initiative, is launching a website that will support the facilitation of

discussions between patients and healthcare professionals, available at [www.msintthe21stcentury.com](http://www.msintthe21stcentury.com).

To learn more about the Company's activities and the #MSInsideOut Campaign, follow [@EMDSerono](https://twitter.com/EMDSerono) on Twitter and the Healthcare Business of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/merck) from World MS Day onwards to view, like and share stories that will help others better understand MS.

\* For every use of the hashtag #MSInsideOut until June 8, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany will donate €1 towards MSIF's ongoing research fellowship program- to mark the Company's commitment to MS over the last two decades.

### **About Multiple Sclerosis (MS)**

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory condition of the central nervous system and is the most common, non-traumatic, disabling neurological disease in young adults. It is estimated that approximately 2.3 million people have MS worldwide. While symptoms can vary, the most common symptoms of MS include blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the limbs and problems with strength and coordination. The relapsing forms of MS are the most common.

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### **About World MS Day 2018**

World MS Day is officially marked on the last Wednesday of May. Events and campaigns take place throughout the month of May. It brings the global MS community together to share stories, raise awareness and campaign with and for everyone affected by multiple sclerosis. In 2009, the [MS International Federation \(MSIF\)](http://www.msif.org) and its members initiated the first World MS Day. Campaigns are rolled out globally which focus on a different theme each year. The theme for World MS Day 2018 is 'Bringing Us Closer'.

### **About Shift.ms**

Shift.ms - [www.Shift.ms](http://www.Shift.ms) - is the social network for people with multiple sclerosis. Founded by MSers, for MSers, the charity supports many thousands of recently diagnosed people across the world as they make sense of MS. It's independent and it's free.

### **About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Almost 53,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life - from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2017, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 15.3 billion in 66 countries.

Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the „Merck“ name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Neurology Disorders and Strokes. Multiple Sclerosis: Hope Through Research. [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/multiple\\_sclerosis/detail\\_multiple\\_sclerosis.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/multiple_sclerosis/detail_multiple_sclerosis.htm). Accessed May 3, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Luzzio C, Dangond F. Multiple Sclerosis. Medscape. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1146199-overview>. Accessed February 22, 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> Kantar Health. May 2017. NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY, 2016 [EU]. New York, NY