



**(W11) DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CONSORTIUM  
WITHIN THE ST. THOMAS HEALTH SYSTEM.**

**Background:** St. Thomas Health Services (STHS) cares for multiple sclerosis patients in Middle Tennessee and in portions of neighboring states. In order to facilitate care of this geographically diverse MS population, and in order to optimize the use of STHS resources, a system-wide approach to MS care delivery was developed.

**Objective:** To integrate independent neurologists and hospitals into a unified MS Care Consortium within STHS.

**Methods:** Four neurologists with specific interest in MS care were recruited from three independent practices within STHS. An MS patient population of 1500 patients was defined. A central MS patient database allowing temporal documentation of the clinical, diagnostic, and therapeutic aspects of each patient's care was developed and implemented. MS specific physiotherapy and MRI services were developed. MS nursing specialists were made available to provide needed nursing resources locally.

**Results:** After one year, member neurology practices were linked and able to share MS patient care data. The centralization of MRI scanning allowed utilization of conventional and non-conventional protocols optimized for MS imaging. MS Nursing specialists provided site-directed patient care not otherwise available at a local level.

**Conclusion:** An MS Care Consortium linking individual neurologists and hospitals within the STHS was implemented, allowing optimal use of system-wide resources while optimizing and enhancing the services and care available to MS patients at a local level.

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