



# spotlight on health

## Tips For College Students Managing A Chronic Disease

(NAPSA)—College is an entirely new world for recent high school graduates. But for young people with a chronic disease, college presents even more unique challenges. Fortunately, there are ways they can manage their condition and enjoy their college experience. It's a lesson learned by Tiffany, a sophomore at Central State University in Ohio. Tiffany is a full-time, working student living with relapsing multiple sclerosis (MS). She attributes her ability to juggle it all and still have fun in the process to her positive spirit and ability to take charge of her health.

"It's not always easy, but if you're willing to make the necessary adjustments, living the life of a typical college student is completely doable. For me, taking my MS treatment is key, combined with getting plenty of rest and managing stress as much as possible," said Tiffany. "In my experience, it helps to have a 'go-to' person who can give you a hand if you aren't feeling up to attending class and need to get your assignments from your professors."

This sentiment is echoed by Vickie, who also has relapsing MS and is a master's student at Albertus Magnus College in Connecticut. To help manage their MS and stay focused on getting the most out of their college experiences, Vickie and Tiffany joined MS LifeLines®, a hands-on support network and educational community for people with MS and their families. This dynamic program, which features online, in-person and telephone services, includes resources such as:

• **Ambassadors**—Individuals living with relapsing MS who serve as resources to the MS community by providing guidance, support and empowerment about living well with MS;



**Vickie, a graduate student who has multiple sclerosis, helps other students who have MS manage their condition.**

• **Registered, MS-certified nurses** who are available to help people living with MS with education, training and support;

• **Peer Connection program** that matches people living with relapsing MS with program ambassadors to discuss issues facing them with someone who understands;

• **Magazine** featuring strategies for living well with MS; and

• **Financial information** and reimbursement services for those who qualify.

Vickie and Tiffany credit the program with helping them to get through many difficult times; now they both serve as student ambassadors for the program.

"Before joining this program, I didn't know anyone else with MS. I'm now involved with a peer chat program and have learned so much from people who have been living with this disease for a long time," said Vickie.

According to Sarah Batchelder, a nurse supervisor, "When you call

MS LifeLines, you can take comfort in knowing that the person at the other end of the line is a good listener who is qualified to give you support to help navigate common challenges faced by people with MS."

Batchelder, along with Tiffany and Vickie, offer the following tips to other students trying to manage a chronic condition in college:

### **Be Proactive**

• Meet with the campus health center in advance of the school year to inform them of your condition and find out what help is available.

• Get a referral from your hometown physician and interview campus doctors at orientation.

• Ask the school health center to keep a copy of your most recent medical records on file.

• If you feel comfortable, let select professors know about your condition so they will understand if you need to take breaks during class or reschedule a test.

### **Seek Support**

• Seek out campus or community support groups to meet others who share your experiences.

• Consider reaching out to a local nonprofit organization such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to learn about available services.

### **Join Online Communities**

• Find an online community to speak to others who identify with what you're going through and to access the latest research and information about your condition.

### **Learn More**

For more information about relapsing MS and joining a network of support, visit [www.MSLifeLines.com/college](http://www.MSLifeLines.com/college) or call (877) 447-3243.