



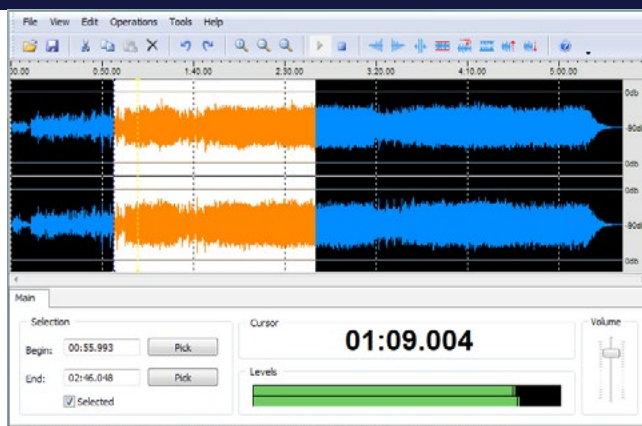
Congressional Champions to Re-Introduce Legislation to Waive Five Month SSDI Wait

Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Representatives Seth Moulton (D-MA-6) and Peter King (R-NY-2) will soon introduce legislation to waive the five month waiting period before an individual can receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and Medicare. The waiting period begins after a claimant has been approved. This legislation, spearheaded by The ALS Association, is a top priority for people living with ALS and will be introduced during the week of February 13. [Click here](#) to learn more and find out how you can get involved.



New Voice Banking Partnerships

Our Chapter is excited to announce new partnerships with the University of Minnesota-Duluth and the St. Cloud State Speech-Language Departments! We will now offer voice banking services on campus at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, St. Cloud State, and the University of Minnesota for anyone living with ALS. Voice banking is designed to give people who are losing their voice the ability to create a synthesized voice. Voice banking generally takes between 8-10 hours to record the maximal 1600 sentences through a program called Model Talker. We are also working on partnerships with other Universities in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota and hope to be able to offer these services across our service area in 2017. Voice banking service will be fully funded by The ALS Association.



Please note that voice banking can also be completed in the comfort of your own home using your laptop or desktop computer and a Sennheiser PC-36 USB headset microphone. If you are interested in voice banking, please contact Kristin Wallock at kristin@alsmn.org.



Make Life Easier for a Couple in Chamberlain, SD

If you live near Chamberlain, SD and have just three hours a month, you could make a huge difference! A 61 year old woman living with ALS and her husband could use some help cleaning their house. When it gets warmer, the husband would love someone who could visit with his wife while he works in the yard.

This is just one of many opportunities available as part of our Family Assistance Program. This program matches trained volunteers with families affected by ALS to help with everyday tasks. With volunteer assistance, families report decreased stress and increased quality time together.



If you have some time to give and want to establish a relationship with someone with ALS, please consider joining this program. A list of all of our current requests, including location, frequency, and type of help requested, can be found on the [volunteer page of our website](#).

For more information or to express an interest in one of these opportunities, please contact Laura Winterstein, Volunteer Manager, at 888-672-0484 or volunteercoordinator@alsmn.org.



Black Woods Blizzard Tour

The **Black Woods Blizzard Tour** is in full swing! The riders are out on the trails and we're on our way to ride to a million! It's not too late to show your support and make a difference for those living with ALS. [Click here](#) to make your donation today. Be sure to check back next month for a full recap of the event.



Thursday, February 9 is Giving Hearts Day 2017! Make a contribution that will directly impact the lives of those in your community living with ALS. Visit givingheartsday.org to make your donation. All donations of \$10 or more will be matched up to \$4,000. Your donation will support critical programming and services in our region. Durable medical equipment, communication devices, family assistance, and respite services are all offered free of charge to people living with ALS. Donors like you help make our service model sustainable. Thank you for considering our cause and joining in our mission to end ALS.

2017 Walk to Defeat ALS Season is Here!



Ready to kick off the new year with a fresh goal? Register today to participate in the Walk to Defeat ALS and find out how you can be a hero to those living with ALS!

Check out the dates below and click on the Walk nearest you to find out more or get started.

Mankato - April 29
Bismarck - May 6
Rapid City - June 24
Fargo - August 19

St. Cloud - August 26
Rochester - September 9
Twin Cities - September 16
Sioux Falls - September 23

Have questions or want to get a jump-start on your fundraising? Contact your Walk Coordinator:

Dakota Walks: Chelsea Cronin (chelsea@alsmn.org) or 605-274-0230

Minnesota Walks: Ashley Yoder (ashley@alsmn.org) or 612-455-8330



NoiseTag BCI is the Assistive Technology of the Future

A type of assistive technology, called brain computer interface (BCI), has been around for years with much room for improvement. We sat down with the 2016 ALS Assistive Technology Challenge winner, Dr. Peter Desain from Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, who invented NoiseTag BCI that gives a novel spin on BCI technology. It is faster, more comfortable and efficient, and easier to use than ever before. [Learn more](#) in our interview with Dr. Desain.

