

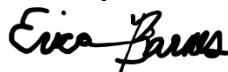
David Walk, M.D.  
Professor  
Department of Neurology  
University of Minnesota

Dear Dr Walk,

On behalf of the Minnesota Rare Disease Advisory Council, I am writing to express our strong support of your proposal for the *David J. Tomassoni Center for Innovation in ALS Research and Care across Minnesota*. Due to small patient populations that are geographically dispersed, progress in rare disease treatment requires collaboration across health systems. Minnesota is fortunate to have several dedicated ALS multidisciplinary centers with complementary clinical research interests and resources. The Tomassoni Center will provide a cost-effective mechanism to avoid administrative replication and leverage the strengths of each institution/investigator on a statewide level, while also enabling the exponential advancement of both research and clinical care that inevitably arises from collaboration and sharing of ideas.

In addition, we hope that this structure will deliberately engage patients, families, and providers beyond subspecialty centers of excellence, which tend to be concentrated in metro areas. Many Minnesotans obtain high-quality services from integrated health systems and do not access academic medical centers. We encourage you to see this as an opportunity to develop strategies for dissemination of best practices and collaborative rare disease research and management that could serve as a model for other regions. We enthusiastically support this proposal and look forward to the opportunity to advise you on its implementation.

Sincerely,



Erica Barnes, M.A, CCC-SLP  
Executive Director