**Neuromuscular & ALS Center of New Jersey**
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Clinical Academic Building
125 Paterson Street, Suite 6100
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
**Appointments: 732-235-7733**

**als.rwjms.rutgers.edu**

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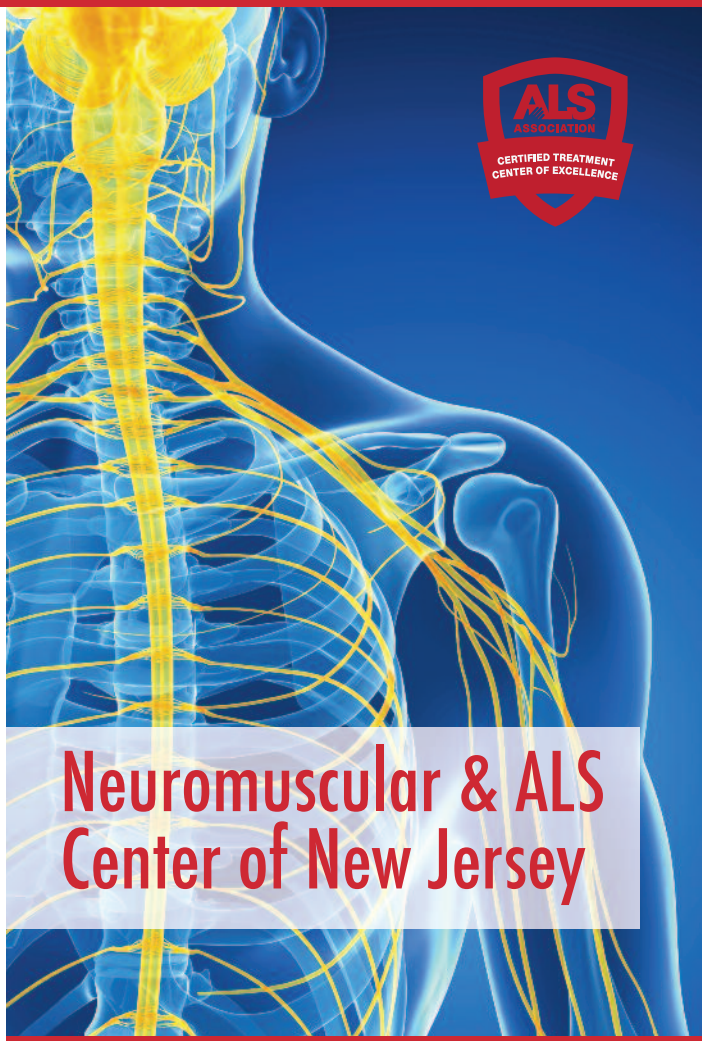
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

RWJ ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

*Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*




# Neuromuscular & ALS Center of New Jersey

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*Supported by the ALS Association, Greater New York Chapter*

## The Neuromuscular & ALS Center of New Jersey is a joint program of the Department of Neurology at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) for the diagnosis and management of adult neuromuscular diseases.

The Center conducts a multidisciplinary program for the evaluation, diagnosis, and long-term care of patients with ALS and related disorders. A coordinated team of ALS health care professionals from the medical school and hospital provides expertise in dealing with the specific needs of each patient and family.

The center is the only neurologic clinical site in New Jersey specializing in ALS and has been designated since 1996 as a Certified Treatment Center of Excellence by the national ALS Association. As part of its mission, the ALS Association Greater New York Chapter, provides generous support for the center.

ALS ASSOCIATION
CERTIFIED TREATMENT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

All diagnostic testing is available at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, including electromyography (EMG), nerve conduction studies, MRI and other neuroimaging studies, and muscle or nerve biopsy when needed.

Expert physicians of the hospital and medical school are available to our patients on a consultative basis.

## Research

The Neuromuscular & ALS Center of New Jersey is actively involved in clinical trials aimed at studying the disease and finding an effective drug treatment for ALS. The Center is a member of NEALS (Northeast ALS Consortium), a national group of academic ALS centers committed to translating scientific advances into new treatments.

## The ALS Association

The ALS Association's mission is to lead the fight to treat and cure ALS through global research and nationwide advocacy, while also empowering people with Lou Gehrig's disease and their families to live fuller lives by providing them with compassionate care and support. The ALS Association Greater New York Chapter can be reached at 212-619-1400 and online at www.als-ny.org.

# What is ALS?

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive disease of the motor neurons (nerve cells that control the skeletal muscles). As motor neurons are affected, gradual weakness, atrophy, and paralysis of the skeletal muscles occur. These muscles may include those that control walking, arm movements, speech, swallowing, and breathing. Less commonly, ALS may affect behavior and intellect. ALS does not affect a person's vision, sensation, or bladder, bowel, and sexual function.

Rare subtypes of ALS include PMA (progressive muscular atrophy), PLS (primary lateral sclerosis), and PBP (progressive bulbar palsy).

Currently, the cause and ultimate cure for ALS remain unknown, but effective management is available.

# Our Multidisciplinary Team

### Neurologist
A board-certified specialist who provides an expert evaluation of the patient's neurologic and neuromuscular function, makes a diagnosis, and monitors the long-term course of the disease; performs electrodiagnostic testing (nerve conduction studies and EMG); and works as the ALS team leader and provides a plan of overall management.

### Nurse Care Coordinator
A registered professional nurse who coordinates patient visits to the Center, provides specialized input to the patient care plan, and acts as a resource person when patients have questions about their disease or plan of management.

### Physical Therapist
A licensed professional who evaluates muscle strength, walking ability, balance, and endurance; and recommends appropriate exercise programs, mobility aids, and orthotic devices.

### Occupational Therapist
A registered professional who evaluates difficulties in daily activities (e.g., dressing, feeding, bed mobility, and toileting) and assists patients in maintaining independent function and adapting to upper limb weakness.

### Speech-Language Pathologist
A licensed professional in speech therapy who assesses speech and swallowing difficulties; provides strategies to overcome these problems; and assesses patient need for alternative means of communication and for tube feeding.

### Clinical Dietitian/Nutritionist
A registered professional who evaluates the patient's nutrition, hydration, and weight status; assists with eating and elimination difficulties; and recommends appropriate adjustment of diets.

### Social Worker
A licensed professional who helps the patient utilize health care benefits and community resources; provides supportive counseling for patients and families regarding social, emotional, and financial difficulties; and provides information about living wills, hospice, and other end-of-life issues.

### Pulmonary Specialist
A physician who evaluates and monitors respiratory function and treats pulmonary infections and breathing difficulties; and advises patients regarding ventilators (e.g., BiPAP), long-term respiratory issues (tracheostomy, hospice), and nutritional support.

### Gastroenterology Specialist
A physician who performs the endoscopic insertion of a feeding tube (PEG) into the stomach and provides post-procedure care.

### Research Coordinator
A professional who helps to plan, organize, and carry out clinical studies and treatment trials that are made available to patients. Studies are aimed at improving our knowledge of ALS and developing new ALS treatments.

## About Our Neurologists

**Jerry M. Belsh, MD**, is professor of neurology and chief of the division of clinical neurophysiology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. For more than 30 years he has been caring for patients with neuromuscular diseases at the medical school in New Brunswick. Dr. Belsh completed his neurology residency training at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., and did his fellowship at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City. He is the co-editor, with Philip Schiffman, MD, of the book *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis: Diagnosis and Management for the Clinician*.

**Shan Chen, MD, PhD**, is assistant professor of neurology at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Chen received her doctorate in neuropharmacology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City. She completed her neurology residency training at JFK Medical Center, Edison, N.J., and did her neuromuscular fellowship training at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore.

**Megan M. Leitch, MD**, is assistant professor of neurology at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Leitch completed her neurology residency training and neuromuscular fellowship at Columbia University Medical Center/NewYork–Presbyterian Hospital in New York City.


## Support Groups

The Center, along with the ALS Association Greater New York Chapter, runs two support groups open to our ALS patients and families. One meets at the Robert Wood Johnson Fitness and Wellness Center in New Brunswick on the third Saturday afternoon of each month. The second meets at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, Saddle Brook campus, on the first Thursday evening of each month. The support groups provide speakers on important ALS topics, offer a social setting where ALS families can interact, and provide psychological support.

For more information, contact one of the support group facilitators:

Mary Ann Mertz
**732-235-7331**
Email: mertzml@rutgers.edu

or

Debbie Schlossberg
**732-710-8832**
Email: schlossberg@als-ny.org

# Directions

## Clinical Academic Building (CAB)
## 125 Paterson Street, Suite 6100
## New Brunswick, NJ

**From the NJ Turnpike:**
Take Exit 9 (New Brunswick) and proceed to Route 18 North about two miles to Route 27 South (Princeton exit). Follow Route 27 past the New Brunswick Railroad Station. At this point, Route 27 becomes French Street. After passing under the railroad trestle, turn LEFT at Joyce Kilmer Street. Turn RIGHT at the first light onto Paterson Street. The Paterson Street parking garage will be ½ block down on the left; the CAB will be on the right.

**From Route 1 North/South:**
Take Route 18 North (to New Brunswick area) and follow directions as listed above.

**From Route 287 North/South:**
Take Exit 10 (Route 527 – New Brunswick) for about six miles to a T–intersection (the New Brunswick Railroad Station will be on the left). Turn RIGHT onto Route 27 South (French Street). After passing under the railroad trestle, turn LEFT at Joyce Kilmer Street and RIGHT onto Paterson Street.

**From the Garden State Parkway (GSP):**
*From GSP North:* Exit at Route 1 South (exit 130). Proceed about 9 miles to Route 18 North. Follow directions as listed above.
*From GSP South:* Exit onto NJ Turnpike South. Follow directions as listed above.

**Both the Clinical Academic Building and the adjacent Paterson Street parking garage are wheelchair accessible. Valet parking also is available.**

# Contact Us

An outpatient appointment for initial neuromuscular evaluation can be made by calling the scheduling office of the Department of Neurology at 732-235-7733. Appropriate physician referral, with accompanying medical records, must be provided. The center participates with most major health care insurance companies, as well as Medicare and New Jersey Medicaid. Follow-up visits to the Neuromuscular & ALS Center of New Jersey can be scheduled depending on the initial evaluation and diagnostic workup. Further information can be obtained by calling the nurse coordinator, Mary Ann Mertz, at 732-235-7331. We are on the web at als.rwjms.rutgers.edu.