Amylyx, a Massachusetts-based pharmaceutical company, published the results of a multi-center placebo-controlled double-blind phase 2 trial of its compound AMX0035 on September 3 in the New England Journal of Medicine. The results of the trial were very promising – people with ALS receiving AMX0035 experienced a significantly slower decline in disease progression, compared to those on a placebo. Additionally, AMX0035 was safe and well-tolerated indicating a good benefit/risk consideration for people with ALS.

What is The ALS Association’s reaction to this news?
We are optimistic that AMX0035 can help people with ALS. We believe the data makes a clear and compelling case that it should be made available to people with ALS as soon as possible. We look forward to working with Amylyx, the FDA, and the ALS community to make that happen.

What were the results of AMX0035 on participants in the clinical trial?
Clinical trial participants who received AMX0035 experienced a clinical meaningful delay in ALS progression as measured by the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Functional Rating Scale (ALSFRS). For many trial participants, that delay meant the difference between being able to feed oneself versus being fed or needing, versus not needing a wheelchair.

How does AMX0035 work?
AMX0035 is a combination of two existing drugs, sodium phenylbutyrate and taurursodiol, which acts to prevent nerve cell death by blocking stress signals in cells. Unlike other treatments in development, AMX0035 does not target the root cause of ALS. Instead, it aims to preserve the motor neurons that are progressively lost in ALS patients, slowing clinical decline.

How is AMX0035 administered?
AMX0035 is an oral therapy (a suspension in water, taken twice daily by swallowing or via PEG tube).

How many people were in enrolled in the trial and across how many sites?
The trial included 137 people with ALS and was conducted across 25 top medical centers through the Northeast ALS (NEALS) consortium.

What were the eligibility requirements for the trial?
All individuals enrolled in the trial were diagnosed with sporadic or familial ALS within the previous eight months, and all had rapidly progressing disease. These are stringent enrollment criteria meant to provide the clearest information possible.

When can people with ALS access AMX-0035?
In a best case scenario, Amylyx will submit a new drug application (NDA) to the FDA before the end of the year. FDA will take several months to review the NDA and can then use its authority to waive the phase 3 clinical trial to expedite AMX-0035 to market, where additional “real world” study of the drug can continue. This process would likely follow a 12 to 15-month timeline. The other scenario would require the same process plus a three-year phase 4 trial.

Given that the drug has always been well tolerated and is shown to be effective in slowing disease progression, we don’t believe the delay and additional information gained from a phase 3 trial is needed. Through our petition initiative with I AM ALS, we are urging FDA and Amylyx to work together to bring the drug to market as soon as possible, without a phase 3 trial. To sign the petition, visit: www.als.org/petition.

What’s next for AMX0035?
Urgent action is necessary. People with ALS cannot wait for the full experimental process for AMX0035 to continue. We are asking the FDA and Amylyx to work together to bring AMX0035 to people with ALS as soon as possible, prior to a phase 3 trial. We ask that the FDA conduct a swift review, require aggressive follow-on studies, and that Amylyx allows expanded access of the AMX0035 until approval.

Was this trial funded by The ALS Association?
The ALS Association supported this trial through ALS Ice Bucket Challenge donations, with $2.2 million in grants toward the company and the clinical trial network. We did this in partnership with ALS Finding a Cure for a total of $2.96 million.
Walk Your Way

On Saturday, September 19th, Springfield and Columbia celebrated The Walk to Defeat ALS in a slightly different way this year. Instead of gathering in two cities on two dates, we selected one day and asked all our friends to host their own mini walk celebration. We called it the 2020 #WalkYourWay to Defeat ALS.

We had companies gather their employees and walk. We had families gather for picnics and shared stories of love and commitment. We had parades, caravans, and decorated bicycles. We saw sidewalks covered in messages “Beat ALS”, “Walking for Grandma” and others. It was so exciting to see so many people celebrating, in their own personal way.

We loved all the pictures and videos, but we missed YOU. 2020 has changed lives and taken so many things from so many, and The Walk was just one example. We missed being together. We missed the sounds of laughter, the hugs and even the tears. We missed sharing stories and inside jokes; missed sharing our frustrations for ALS and sharing our hope for treatments.

We hope those of you who have not yet put together a team and walked are still planning to host your event. We have until the end of the year to raise funds and awareness; we need to take every advantage.

Now we look to 2021. It is our wish that we can convene in 2021 to walk together, and that the good news from research continues to give us hope. Walk Day will be even more special having spent this one apart.

Virtual Grief Support Group

Feeling isolated due to social distancing? Want to stay connected with others experiencing loss? Looking for a safe space to share your story? Join us on Zoom on Wednesday, October 21st at 6:30 p.m. for a virtual grief support group.

The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter and Ascend Hospice have partnered together to provide a virtual grief support group. The group will meet every third Wednesday of the month, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., for those who have lost a loved one to ALS. With the need for social distancing, this group will allow us to gather together to share our unique stories and support each other as we grieve.

For directions on how to join a virtual meeting, please contact Cheri Ball (Ascend Hospice Bereavement Coordinator) at 816-506-5763 or email Cheri at cheri.ball@ascendhealth.com.

ALS Focus Survey

ALS Focus is a patient and caregiver-led survey program that asks people impacted by ALS about their needs and burdens. The goal is to learn about individual experiences throughout the disease journey so that the entire ALS community can benefit.

Data and findings collected from the surveys are de-identified. The data will be used to inform decisions and strengthen programs and policies around drug development, clinical trial design, regulatory review, drug payment and reimbursement, clinical care, home health, and more.

Registering for Focus and completing the surveys will take approximately 15-25 minutes. For more information, and to access the survey, visit: www.als.org/als-focus.