History of the GBS/CIDP Foundation International

In November 1979, Robert Benson was stricken with Guillain-Barré syndrome following a severe cold and cough. During the weeks he spent in ICU, his wife, Estelle, was appalled that no information or supportive group existed concerning GBS. She vowed that, when and if he recovered, they would do something about it. The following year, eight people met in their home and the foundation for the Guillain-Barré Syndrome Support Group was laid.

As the GBS community expanded, the Foundation chapters in the United Kingdom, Australia, India and Canada became full-fledged organizations in their own right. Since that time, the Foundation has expanded its interests and established additional groups for GBS variants, including CIDP, Children with GBS, Children with CIDP, Axonal GBS'ers, Miller Fisher Variant Group, AMSAN Group, Campylobacter Precipitated GBS, and Teenagers with GBS.

In 2005, the Guillain-Barré Syndrome Foundation International, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, changed its name to the Guillain-Barré Syndrome / Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy Foundation International in recognition of the increasing numbers of CIDP patients. What started as a “good deed” is now an international organization. The GBS/CIDP Foundation International, beginning as a grass roots effort, has become an international organization reaching six continents with almost 174 chapters and over 30,000 members creating a unique network ensuring that no GBS/CIDP patient or family member is alone.

The Foundation’s Medical Advisory Board consists of the top neurologists and physiatrists in the world who lend, unstintingly, their time and support to the foundation’s efforts. These experts in the diagnosis, treatment, and research of GBS and CIDP, many of whom have authored textbooks on the disorders, are considered to be the "think-tank" of both GBS and CIDP. Additionally, our advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere focus on issues relevant to the GBS/CIDP population.

Through support, education, advocacy, and research, the Foundation hopes to solve the mysteries of these potentially catastrophic disorders and provide for past and future GBS/CIDP patients.