



15 May, 2011

Dear BallouSkies Team,

Hello again from The Ohio State University, where our team of physicians, scientists, students and staff continue to make significant progress towards helping boys with muscular dystrophy live longer, healthier lives with your invaluable support. Our goals remain: 1) to improve diagnosis and treatment of heart muscle disease for individuals with muscular dystrophies, 2) to better understand through research how muscle can be protected from damage to guide development of better treatments, and 3) to educate doctors and scientists so that our advances can benefit patients all around the world.

It was a great joy for me to visit the Ballous on Thursday, May 12 and share our progress over the last 6 months, which is summarized in this note. Our clinical team continues to provide more accurate, earlier diagnosis of heart muscle involvement in patients with muscular dystrophies, allowing use of appropriate medicines proven to protect heart muscle from further damage. In parallel, our research team's dramatic progress has identified potential preventive treatments in mice with genetic changes that cause similar muscle weakening that people with muscular dystrophy develop; the treatment tested suggests we could prevent or significantly slow the muscle damage not only in the heart but also in other muscles throughout the body. This work is currently undergoing rigorous review by independent scientists at one of the most prestigious journals of scientific research; such critical review is an essential part of making progress for patients because it provides validation for a new, preventive approach that we think is worthy of testing in a clinical trial. If published, we will be able to secure additional research funding, multiplying the impact of every BallouSkies dollar, to efficiently conduct a randomized clinical trial that tests a new treatment for patients with muscular dystrophy.

Why is a clinical trial needed? Because it generates the type of evidence patients with muscular dystrophy and their doctors need to be sure that a new treatment, even though it might use an old drug, really works as expected. We are actively putting together an all-star team that can execute a high-caliber clinical trial as quickly as possible; the sooner we can start, the sooner we can find out if the new treatment works and the sooner we can transmit this knowledge to medical centers around the world.

With the continued support of BallouSkies, we can continue our amazingly rapid pace forward in finding better ways to improve the lives of people with muscular dystrophies. We thank you for your commitment to helping us achieve these goals, and we renew our pledge to be careful stewards of your support.

Wishing you good health, good friends and good cheer in 2011,

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