

Dear Dr. Bedlack,
Dear friends, patients, caregivers, and colleagues,

Welcome to our Association's 28th online Support Group for people living with ALS, and thank you all for joining us.

Today is a very meaningful moment for us, as Dr. Richard Bedlack is with us.

Most of us here already know Dr. Bedlack's distinguished biography through our announcements. His academic achievements, research contributions, and international recognition, speak for themselves.

So today, instead of repeating what is already known, I would like to speak about something more personal.

Dear Dr. Bedlack, I clearly remember our first connection — on June 8, 2022 — during a video call to discuss CRLI opportunities for Greece. At that time, our Association had not yet been formally established — that would come in 2024 — but the commitment and the vision were already there: to connect Greece with the international ALS research and advocacy community.

It became clear to me that if we wanted to move things forward in Greece, we needed a formal Association — a collective voice.

From that first exchange, what impressed me most was not only your distinguished role as Professor of Neurology at Duke University and Director of the Duke ALS Clinic. It was your openness — your willingness to listen, to include, and to treat patients as true research partners.

I remember feeling profoundly encouraged — not only professionally, but personally — by the possibility of building something meaningful across borders.

That first conversation quietly reaffirmed why this work matters, and why collaboration grounded in respect can truly move communities forward.

That conversation was not simply about a learning institute. It was about possibility.

It was about whether Greece could be part of a broader, global effort to empower patients through knowledge and responsible research engagement.

Through ALSUntangled, you have helped patients navigate alternative and off-label treatments with scientific clarity and integrity.

Through the ALS Reversals program, you have explored unexpected recoveries with intellectual courage — not to promise miracles, but to understand them.

And today, nearly four years after that first call, you are here with us — speaking directly to the Greek ALS community.

For a young but determined Association like ours, this is more than an academic exchange.

It is continuity.

It is collaboration.

It is proof that meaningful dialogue can grow across countries and over time.

I would also like to personally thank you for allowing us to announce your participation publicly.

After we shared our press release, national media in Greece responded with genuine interest and coverage. This reflects not only the importance of ALS awareness in our country, but also the significance of your work within the global scientific community.

Your voice carries weight — and today, that weight supports and strengthens our community.

As President of the Hellenic ALS Association — and as someone personally touched by ALS — I know how complex this journey is. Progress is not abstract. It is measured in conversations like this, in experts who listen, and in knowledge that is shared responsibly.

And nearly four years after that first conversation, what began as a virtual discussion has become a real connection.

Dr. Bedlack, thank you for walking this path with us.

We are truly honored.

The floor is yours.