

## **NMOSD WON'T STOP ME: HOLLY STORY VIDEO TRANSCRIPT**

**Holly:** We've been married for 39 years. I married him because I loved him and that keeps me going.

When things started to change with Doug, he started to just have some weird symptoms. He used to be the one to get up in the morning and, "Okay, let's get going." And I started to be the one to get up. And he would be the one that slept a little bit longer.

He got sick, he would get the hiccups, he had vomiting, he had nausea, had a headache behind his ear that worried us a little bit. And we couldn't get anybody to do an MRI for about four months. And it was frustrating because we watched him get sicker, and sicker, and sicker. Within a week he lost his legs and was in a wheelchair.

It was pretty scary and then still couldn't get an MRI for three days after that. And he sat on the couch. I couldn't lift him. I couldn't move him. We had somebody help us carry him to the car and was able to go get the MRI, and then to the hospital. He was paralyzed, and I didn't know if he'd walk again. And the doctor came in afterwards and said, "Okay, can you move your toe?" And he did. And I will always remember that, that there was hope.

I didn't leave his side. I helped him as much as they would let me help him. In the beginning, I was afraid to go home, because I didn't want to leave him. I needed him, and he needed me. But finally, he said, "You need to go home." He needed me to go home.

I would wake up at the same time and go to the hospital, and then we would do whatever had to happen that day. And then I would go home and sit on my couch and wrap myself in a blanket, worried about him. And then I go to bed, and then I'd get up at the same time and do the same thing. And I did that for all the weeks he was there.

**Onscreen text:** After several weeks in the hospital, Doug was diagnosed with neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder, or NMOSD.

**NMOSD is a rare, lifelong autoimmune disease caused by inflammation of the central nervous system, which is made up of the optic nerve, brain stem and spinal cord.**

**Holly:** That actually was a really positive day. Having an answer was such a relief. Because when you don't know what's wrong, you can think of all kinds of scary things. And when we got an answer, okay, now we can do some research. Now we can figure out what this is and what can we do and what we won't be able to do it.

**Onscreen text:** After the diagnosis, Doug, Holly and their care team determined a treatment plan to help him back on his feet.

**Holly:** He was in the hospital for 10 weeks. I did sometimes feel like I lost myself. A lot of people would say to me, "Who takes care of you?" And I would sit back, and I think, "Who does take care of me?" I had to figure out who I was and where I fit into this

picture. I finally had to say, "I need a day. I need just a day where I can do the things that I need to do for me."

I have grown a lot. I do so much more than I ever thought I would be able to do. My faith is everything. It's everything. It's what keeps me going. I would encourage anybody to find people and help others because that helps me. But to find people so that you don't feel so alone, that you belong, you belong somewhere.

It's important to reach out when you need help. I think it's important to let people help, when you can. And it's what kept me from being angry. It's what's helped me have hope that we're going to be okay. It's going to be okay. There's always hope.

Doug's amazing. He can walk short distances. We still use the wheelchair, but he is doing well. He's just a really great guy, and I've seen him grow with this disease. This didn't happen to him, it happened to us. I thank him every day for sticking with me.

**Onscreen text: [Hear more unstoppable stories and learn more at NMOSDWontStopMe.com](http://NMOSDWontStopMe.com)**