

**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

Deb Kohl of Champion has lived with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) for 13 years. Sometimes her symptoms are visible, and sometimes no one knows what's going on inside her body.

That's why she's interested in organizing an MS support group.

"I'm not getting the support I need and there isn't one in this area. The closest one is North Platte," she explained.

Kohl doesn't know how many people will be interested in the group, but is aware of a number of people in the area with MS.

"We need someone in this area just to talk to," she stated. "There are several resources available that I don't think people are aware of."

Kohl's medication to help her walk costs \$8,000 per month. Her medication to keep her in remission costs \$60,000 per month. When she had a relapse, an eight-day supply of medication cost \$120,000.

The company that manufactures the medications pays for them, she noted.

She's had trouble finding a doctor in the area who is familiar with MS.

Shona Heim of Heartland Counseling is supporting Kohl in her effort to get a group started.

"My hope is that if enough people show interest it might call for a specialty clinic to come to the area if it's financially feasible," she said.

MS is a chronic neurological disorder that affects the central nervous system.

Kohl said the immune system attacks the insulation around nerves. Once the insulation is exposed the nerves are broken. So, when the brain sends a message to the body the nerves don't respond.

In her situation, Kohl also said her brain cells have been attacked, building up plaque that hardens. That can affect her balance and short-term memory.

Plaque in her spinal column affects feeling in her fingers. She shakes, also.

Factors such as heat and stress can cause relapses.

Heim said "People get relapses and can't do things they used to, and people don't understand that."

Anyone interested in forming an MS support group is asked to attend a meeting Aug. 10 at 10 a.m. in the Chase County Community Hospital conference room.

Questions may be directed to Kohl at (308) 883-1382 or at [dkohl2010@hotmail.com](mailto:dkohl2010@hotmail.com).