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SPRING 2023

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF PARKINSON'S FOUNDATION

As PD Diagnoses Surge, Parkinson's Foundation Forges New Partnership

The Parkinson's Foundation released a study last December with eye-opening results. Our report estimates nearly 90,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) each year. This is a steep 50% increase from the previous estimate of 60,000 diagnoses annually.

In the past, understanding the incidence of PD across the country was based on information from just one set of data. This landmark research combines five different data sets — ranging from locally to nationally based.

That makes our study the most comprehensive assessment of Parkinson's incidence in North America. Among its key findings, the incidence of PD:

- Increases with age in the 65+ range
- Is higher in males as compared to females at all ages
- Is higher in certain geographic regions: the "Rust Belt," Southern California, Southeastern Texas, Central Pennsylvania and Florida

With your support, we'll use the data to help provide resources, outreach and advocacy tailored to those who need access to vital information and services — so they can live better with Parkinson's until we find a cure.

Driving Drug Discovery and Development

PD is on the rise, and we must accelerate breakthroughs in treatments now! That is why the Foundation is partnering with Parkinson's UK to invest in the Parkinson's Virtual Biotech — a research-driven investment fund.



Our goal is to provide targeted funding to biotech companies that can develop new therapies to treat and, ultimately cure, Parkinson's.

Like other biotech funds, the Parkinson's Virtual Biotech uses cutting-edge biology and technology to discover and develop new potential PD treatments. **However, it's driven by the needs of people with PD, instead of profit.** We can collaborate without worrying about corporate profits or shareholder reports, yet we will be able to adapt successful methods from the business world to deliver new therapies faster.

Through this groundbreaking global effort, we believe life-changing new treatments will be available in years, not decades.

To learn more about the Parkinson's Virtual Biotech and other pivotal research, visit Parkinson.org/VirtualBiotech. 

People Power: Spotlighting Diversity and Inclusion

The Parkinson's Foundation 2022 Rising Star Volunteer Awardee Kim Gamble has always been an advocate for the PD community. Not only does she work as a movement disorder clinic coordinator supporting those with PD, she also has volunteered with the Parkinson's Foundation.

Kim describes her job as being the "point of contact for patients, staff, physicians and the PD community." She helps people get the information, support and services they need to live well with Parkinson's.

Kim saw firsthand through her work with the PD community that there was a need for education around PD in underserved areas, so she decided to take her volunteer efforts to the Parkinson's Foundation.

In her professional and volunteer efforts, Kim has always shown a passion for spotlighting diversity and inclusion in the PD community. She says, "I rarely see all nationalities represented. I know PD is not an exclusive diagnosis. So I work to educate underserved communities, provide resources and connect them to others who look like them."

"My goal is to remove barriers, educate patients and families and empower them to live their best life with PD."

— Kim Gamble,
2022 Rising Star Volunteer Award recipient

Kim started volunteering with the Parkinson's Foundation in 2021 and serves on the Parkinson's Foundation Carolinas Chapter Advisory Board. She also chaired our first-ever educational symposium for the African



American community in February 2022. That program's success led the way for similar events from coast to coast.

In addition, Kim also wants to help people understand that, "it's okay not to be okay. Your brain is no different than a broken bone. If you break a bone, you contact the specialist or the orthopedic doctor for treatment. We must become comfortable contacting the specialist for our brain when it's not aligned."

Because of Kim's compassion, advocacy and leadership, we were thrilled to name her as our 2022 Rising Star Volunteer Award recipient. She, in turn, declares that winning the award was possible "because of the hundreds of people with Parkinson's and their families that allowed me to be part of their journey."

On behalf of the entire PD community, thank you, Kim!

To learn about volunteer opportunities with the Parkinson's Foundation, visit [Parkinson.org/Volunteer](https://parkinson.org/Volunteer).

Focus on Education: Closing the Healthcare Gap by Training Providers

As we reported on page one, there's been a dramatic increase in the number of people diagnosed with Parkinson's every year. Yet, there are only about 600 movement disorder specialists (MDS) to treat them nationwide. It can be incredibly challenging for those without a specialist in their local area — without the proper care and advice, it can take longer to get diagnosed or determine the best care plan.

The Parkinson's Foundation is now closing this gap, thanks to your generosity. Our new six-part online educational series offers critical PD information to healthcare teams in medically underserved communities. Parts one and two are currently available, with the last four parts launching throughout 2023. The series is accredited and free of charge.

Our goal is to help neurologists, primary care physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, dentists, community health workers and others deliver culturally sensitive, high-quality



Parkinson's care wherever they work. These courses will:

- Help them improve the care they deliver — from diagnosis to management;
- Enhance understanding of their role in developing customized PD care plans; and
- Highlight the importance of coordinating an entire team to provide the best PD care possible.

For more information on our resources for those with PD and healthcare teams, please visit [Parkinson.org/LearningLab](https://parkinson.org/LearningLab).

Education Series for Community Providers Courses include:

1. *Comprehensive and Equitable Care for People with Parkinson's by Community Providers*
2. *Optimizing Hospital Care for People with Parkinson's*
3. *Utilizing Quality Measures to Improve Parkinson's Care: What Every Neurologist Needs to Know (coming soon)*
4. *The Expert Care Experience: The Role of Nurses in Caring for People with Parkinson's (coming soon)*
5. *The Expert Care Experience: The Role of Social Workers in Caring for People with Parkinson's (coming soon)*
6. *The Expert Care Experience: The Role of Dentists in Caring for People with Parkinson's (coming soon)*

"We have found that many healthcare academic curriculums seldom cover Parkinson's, and generally, those that do only do so briefly. The number of individuals with Parkinson's is rapidly rising, and all healthcare workers will be treating an increased number of people with PD. These courses are designed to address the urgent need of educating care professionals across disciplines on how to best help their patients."

— Eli Pollard, Parkinson's Foundation Chief Education and Training Officer

Community Grants Provide Local Support

With the help of our steadfast supporters, the Parkinson's Foundation has invested more than \$9.4 million in 716 community-based programs since 2011. This effort provides local support to further the health, wellness and educational needs of people with PD across the country.

Our community grants program has grown considerably over the last few years. As a result, we've been able to have a lasting impact on even more lives.

One such community grantee is *Journey Through Parkinson's Disease*. This three-part educational series is led by Elizabeth Stegemoller, PhD, in conjunction with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

The free program educates people with PD in Iowa's rural areas, as well as those who may know someone with the disease. The series helps them better understand PD and make informed treatment decisions.

The three weekly workshops are led by a trained Iowa State University Extension and Outreach specialist. Participants learn to recognize the symptoms of Parkinson's and what causes it; how to seek medical care and how treatments work; and how to explore alternative, home-based therapies.



Dr. Stegemoller herself is a neuroscientist and music therapist. She focuses her research on how music can improve the treatment and care of people with PD. Dr. Stegemoller also hosts an annual PD Singing Festival that brings together singing groups from around the U.S. and the world to celebrate and have fun.

Learn more about our community grants program at Parkinson.org/CommunityGrants. To find out about resources in your own area, call our Helpline at 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636) 

WANT TO DO MORE?

Becoming a monthly donor is easy!
To help fight PD all year long, visit:

Parkinson.org/Monthly

CONTRIBUTION FORM

☐ **YES!** I want to support the innovative work of the Parkinson's Foundation so people with Parkinson's can live the best lives possible. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

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