



PARKINSON'S RESOURCES *of* Oregon

About Us

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

For more than 35 years, Parkinson's Resources of Oregon (PRO) has held a sole focus on providing vital local services to individuals and families in Oregon and SW Washington facing Parkinson's disease, whether they are patient, loved one, or healthcare provider. Together we are bridging the gap between medical care and wellness for those living with Parkinson's. PRO is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- **SUPPORT GROUPS:** A network of over 60 support groups serve as a resource for educational and emotional support to individuals with Parkinson's and their loved ones.
- **WELLNESS CLASSES:** Classes formatted specifically to address common balance, movement, and speech challenges that often impact those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Classes are held throughout the region.
- **PERSONAL RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES:** Via our toll-free HELPLINE, clients have access to current information about the disease, local resources that are available to them, and can connect with a sympathetic listener.
- **ADVOCACY EFFORTS FOR RESEARCH AND BETTER CARE:** Until a cure is found, we will continue to advocate for increased attention to and funding for Parkinson's disease research and better care.
- **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:** Statewide presentations on various topics of special interest for those diagnosed with Parkinson's and their family members.
- **SOCIAL WORK SERVICES:** Free short term counseling and case management.
- **BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:** Complementary copies of the newsletter are sent to clients and supporters, public libraries, neurologists, and other service agencies.
- **LENDING LIBRARY:** Books and videos on topics related to Parkinson's disease are available for loan.
- **LONG TERM CARE TRAINING:** A five-part training program for caregiving professionals.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

PRO's board of directors is comprised of 17 volunteers, six of whom live with Parkinson's disease. More than 250 other volunteers are active in facilitating support groups, program planning, committee work, and office support.

Our staff includes:

HOLLY CHAIMOV | *Executive Director*

LAUREN TIETSORT | *Development Director*

HEATHER BALDUCCI LCSW | *Social Worker*

GINGER DESPINS | *Office Manager*

JESS LONG | *Program Services Coordinator*

MELISSA GREER MPH | *Education & Wellness Coordinator*

DANA KILGUS | *Development Coordinator*

LIBBY KENNARD MA | *Program Coordinator, Mid-Willamette Valley*

CAROL PFEIL | *Program Coordinator, Central Oregon*

SUPPORT FOR PRO

Support comes primarily from individual contributions in the form of monthly donations, annual giving, bequests, and memorials. We hold two annual fundraising events – **Celebrate Hope**, a gala and auction held each spring, and **Sole Support for Parkinson's**, a series of awareness walks held in multiple cities each fall. PRO also receives investments from corporations and foundations. This generous level of community support enables PRO to offer services without requiring payment.



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PARKINSON'S disease 101

WHAT IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

Parkinson's disease is a brain disorder. It occurs when certain nerve cells (neurons) in a part of the brain, called the substantia nigra, die or become impaired. Normally, these cells produce a vital chemical known as dopamine. Dopamine allows smooth, coordinated function of the body's muscles and movement. It is not until approximately 80% of the dopamine-producing cells are damaged that the motor symptoms of Parkinson's disease appear.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

The loss of dopamine production in the brain causes the primary symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The key signs of Parkinson's disease are: Tremor (shaking), slowness of movement, rigidity (stiffness), difficulty with balance. *Other signs of Parkinson's disease may include:* Small, cramped handwriting, stiff facial expression, shuffling walk, muffled speech, and depression.

WHO GETS PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

Parkinson's disease affects both men and women. It shows no social, ethnic, economic or geographic boundaries. In the United States, it is estimated that 60,000 new cases are diagnosed each year, joining the 1 million Americans who currently have Parkinson's disease. While the condition usually develops after the age of 65, 15% of those diagnosed are under 50.

HOW IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE DIAGNOSED?

The process of making a Parkinson's disease diagnosis can be difficult. There is no X-ray or blood test that can confirm Parkinson's disease. A physician arrives at the diagnosis only after a thorough examination. Blood tests and brain scans known as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may be performed to rule out other conditions that have similar symptoms. People suspected of having Parkinson's disease should consider seeking the care of a neurologist who specializes in Parkinson's disease.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

There are a number of effective medicines that help to ease the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Most symptoms are caused by a lack of dopamine. The medicines most commonly used will attempt to either replace or mimic dopamine, which improves the tremor, rigidity and slowness associated with Parkinson's disease. Several new medicines are being studied that may slow the progression. However, currently there is no cure that will stop or reverse the affects of Parkinson's disease. As the disease progresses, treatment plans may need frequent review and adjustment to maintain functioning and quality of life.