



WorriedAboutMemoryLoss.com

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Parkinson's Awareness Month

April is **Parkinson's Awareness Month** and the Michigan Dementia Coalition is teaming up with partner Michigan Parkinson Foundation to bring more public focus to Parkinson's Disease (PD.)

Parkinson's disease is a chronic neurological condition that progresses slowly, with no known cause or cure. The disease often begins with vague symptoms and may not be diagnosed for several years after the condition begins to take hold. Individuals may be informed mistakenly that their symptoms are a part of old age, or told they do have Parkinson's Disease and must just live with the symptoms. However, many symptoms can be managed successfully for a number of years by using a combination of medications. Recently, the advances of surgery (deep brain stimulation) have provided another avenue of treatment. People with Parkinson's do not die of the disease, but their lives and those of their families are altered greatly.

Parkinson's Disease (PD) affects approximately two percent of the population older than 60. It can strike younger people like Michael J. Fox. About 10 percent of individuals with Parkinson's are diagnosed before the age of 50. Estimates of the prevalence of PD vary widely. Estimates of prevalence in Michigan range from 20,000 to 35,000. The cost to Michigan is more than \$200 million a year.

"Many people do not realize that Parkinson's falls in the dementia family of diseases." Said Edwin B. George, M.D., Ph.D, Chairman of the Professional Advisory Board of the Michigan Parkinson Foundation (MPF). "About one third of those diagnosed with PD will have dementia. As with all neurological conditions, early detection is the key to helping families and those diagnosed get the best possible treatment."

The *Michigan Parkinson Foundation*, offers a variety of services across the state. It sponsors over 50 support groups to help people with PD and their families learn more about disease management techniques and how to improve the quality of their lives. Upcoming events in April include special programs through the local support groups, the initiation of a *Living with Parkinson's* 7-week education series and *Orientation to Parkinson's*. Also planned during this year are two "I Gave My Sole To Parkinson's" walk-a-thons and 5K Runs, "A Night of A Thousand Stars" Cabaret benefit, a major symposium – "Transitions in the Management of Parkinson's Disease," and more.

The Michigan Dementia Coalition is the coordinator of a statewide public awareness campaign focusing on dementia and memory loss. WorriedAboutMemoryLoss.com is an education campaign showcasing the facts of memory loss and dementia, and the resources available in Michigan for persons with dementia and their caregivers.

For more information about Parkinson's Disease, contact the Michigan Parkinson Foundation at 800-852-9781. For more information online connect to www.WorriedAboutMemoryLoss.com or call 1-800-272-3900 for services in Michigan. For more information on the Michigan Dementia Coalition, contact Micki Horst, Michigan Public Health Institute at 517-324-7318.

