Michigan Parkinson Foundation
42 YEARS OF HOPE

MESSENGER

SUMMER 2025

At the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, our mission is clear: we are dedicated to serving every person living with Parkinson’s and their families throughout our great state. Whether you live in Detroit, Marquette, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, or anywhere in between, we are working hard to be present in your community.

As we head into the fall season, I encourage you to join us at one of our Walks happening statewide. These events are more than fundraisers. They're a celebration of strength, hope, and unity. Likewise, our educational programs provide the latest information and resources to help you live well with Parkinson’s. And finally, our Gala provides an opportunity to gather for a fun night at Ford Field and raise critical funds for the programs that matter most. Parkinson’s can be isolating, and these programs and events help remind us of the support all around us.

So come walk with us. Learn with us. Celebrate with us.

Forever with you on this journey, with hope in every step,

Kristin Rossi

Kristin Rossi
Michigan Parkinson Foundation CEO

Nutrition and Parkinson's: Supporting Your Gut for Better Health

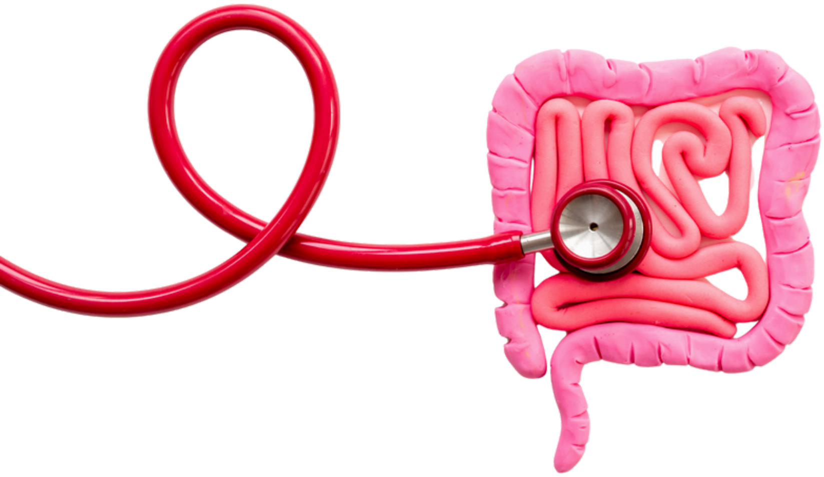
Torrey Davenport, PT, DPT
Northern Michigan Program Manager

We're learning more every day about how the gut plays a role in Parkinson's, and one key piece of the puzzle is the gut microbiome. This refers to the trillions of bacteria and other microbes that live in your digestive system.

These tiny organisms do big jobs: they help digest food, support your immune system, and produce important compounds that may even influence brain health. In people with Parkinson's, research shows that the balance of these gut bacteria is often different from those without the disease. These changes can lead to inflammation, digestive issues like constipation, and may even affect how well medications like Sinemet are absorbed by the body.

"Diet is the most powerful lever we have in influencing Parkinson's."
— Dr. Isaac Goldszer

This topic was the focus of one of our recent Virtual Education Series presentations with Dr. Isaac Goldszer, who shared key insights on how gut health impacts Parkinson's, and what you can do to support both. To view the full video, visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@MichiganParkinsonFoundation



What We Learned from Dr. Goldszer

- Parkinson's may begin in the gut. Emerging research suggests PD might originate in the digestive system, with early changes in gut bacteria and inflammation showing up well before motor symptoms.
- Gut health affects medication. Disruptions in the microbiome may reduce the absorption of medications like Sinemet, making them less effective.
- Processed foods can cause harm. Dr. Goldszer cautions against ultra-processed, high-sugar foods that fuel inflammation and damage beneficial bacteria.
- Small changes matter. You don't need to overhaul your diet overnight. Even gradual improvements can lead to better gut and brain health.

Simple Ways to Support Gut Health

- Eat more fiber. Fiber from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes helps feed healthy gut bacteria and eases constipation.
- Try fermented foods. Yogurt, kefir, kimchi, and sauerkraut contain live cultures that help restore balance in the microbiome.
- Stay hydrated. Water supports digestion and prevents constipation. A general guideline is to drink half your body weight in ounces each day. (For example, someone weighing 160 pounds would aim for 80 ounces of water.)
- Focus on whole foods. A plant-forward diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables provides antioxidants and nutrients that benefit both gut and brain.
- Limit ultra-processed foods. Packaged snacks, sugary beverages, and fast food can damage your microbiome and increase inflammation.
- Ask before taking supplements. Probiotics might be helpful for some, but it's best to talk to your doctor before starting anything new.

Late Summer Recipe: Strawberry Spinach Salad

Directions:

- Place the sliced onions in a bowl and cover with cold water. Let sit while you prepare the rest of the salad (this keeps their flavor but removes the harsh onion bite).
- Prepare the dressing: In a small mixing bowl or large liquid measuring cup, whisk together all of the dressing ingredients—vinegar, oil, poppy seeds, honey, mustard, salt, and pepper—until well combined. (Alternatively, you can shake the ingredients together in a mason jar with a tight-fitting lid).
- Assemble the salad: Place the spinach in a great big serving bowl. Add the strawberries.
- Drain the red onion and add it as well. Drizzle about half of the dressing over the salad and toss to coat the leaves. Assess the amount of dressing. You want the spinach leaves to be nicely moistened but not swimming in dressing. Add a little more if needed to suit your preferences.
- Add the feta and pecans. Toss lightly to combine. Serve immediately, with extra dressing on the side as desired

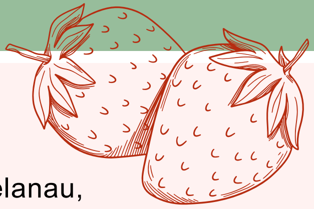
For the Strawberry Spinach Salad:

- ¾ cup toasted pecans
- ½ small red onion, very thinly sliced
- 10 ounces fresh baby spinach. I also love a 50/50 arugula and spinach blend
- 1 quart strawberries hulled and quartered (about 1 pound)
- ¾ cup crumbled feta cheese, buy the block-style feta, not pre-crumbled; the texture is much better

For the Poppy Seed Dressing:

- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ tablespoons poppy seeds
- 1 ½ tablespoons honey
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

Speaking of Strawberries...



In June, the Leelanau Support Group took a summer outing to Bardenhagen Berries in Leelanau, MI, famous for its delicious strawberries. The group enjoyed a beautiful day on the farm, owned by Christi and Gary Bardenhagen. Christi holds a special place in our MPF community as the 2024 Parkinson Honoree at the Traverse City Walk.

It was a day filled with fresh air, friendship, and plenty of berry-picking smiles. Be sure to check out the photos from their trip to see the fun for yourself!

Where to Find Reliable Parkinson's Information and Resources Online:

If you've recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's, it's completely natural to want answers. But with so much information online, it can be hard to know what's trustworthy.

That's why it's important to stick with reputable sources. These organizations are backed by experts, grounded in research, and designed to empower you with accurate, up-to-date information.

Here are some reputable places to start:

✓ Michigan Parkinson Foundation

parkinsonsmi.org

- Statewide listings for support groups and exercise classes
- Educational events like PD 101 and Community Forums
- Access to virtual exercise classes, recorded educational presentations, and caregiver training videos
- Mentorship Program connecting you with someone who understands
- Printable resources and newsletters
- Information tailored for Michigan residents
- Upcoming statewide community events and fundraisers
- Financial assistance information for caregiver respite and medications

*Remember: **you are not alone**, and knowledge is power. Contact us at MPF for information and support throughout your journey! Reach out to our Director of Social Services, Stephanie Woznak, LMSW if you have any questions: 248-419-7170.*

✓ Michael J. Fox Foundation

michaeljfox.org

- "Parkinson's 360" video series and downloadable guides
- Detailed breakdowns of research, treatments, and medications
- Powerful patient and care partner stories
- Tools for getting involved in clinical trials
- Regular podcasts and webinars

✓ Davis Phinney Foundation

davisphinneyfoundation.org

- "Every Victory Counts" manual (free download or print version)
- Guides on exercise, mood, nutrition, and care planning
- Inspirational videos and personal stories
- Podcasts and blog posts from people living with Parkinson's
- Resources for care partners and adult children

✓ Parkinson's Foundation:

parkinson.org

- New to Parkinson's resources & free educational guides
- Helpline staffed by nurses and social workers
- Symptom tracking tools and medication information
- Information on clinical trials and care partners
- "Aware in Care" hospital safety kit

It can be tempting to search social media, forums, or unofficial blogs. While personal stories can offer support, they shouldn't replace medical guidance. Always talk with your doctor before making any changes to your treatment plan.

PD 101: PARKINSON’S ORIENTATION

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM:

PD 101 is a free, in-person orientation designed to help individuals better understand Parkinson’s. Whether you’ve been newly diagnosed, have had Parkinson's for years, are a care partner, family member, friend, or healthcare professional, this program is open to **anyone** looking to learn more about Parkinson’s.

As we continue expanding our PD 101 program to communities across Michigan, new dates and locations are being added regularly. Be sure to check our website and subscribe to our emails to stay up to date on the latest offerings. Below is a list of our upcoming sessions:

Metro Detroit Session:

When: First Wednesday of every month, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Where: MPF Office – 30400 Telegraph Rd., Suite 151, Bingham Farms

Grand Rapids Session:

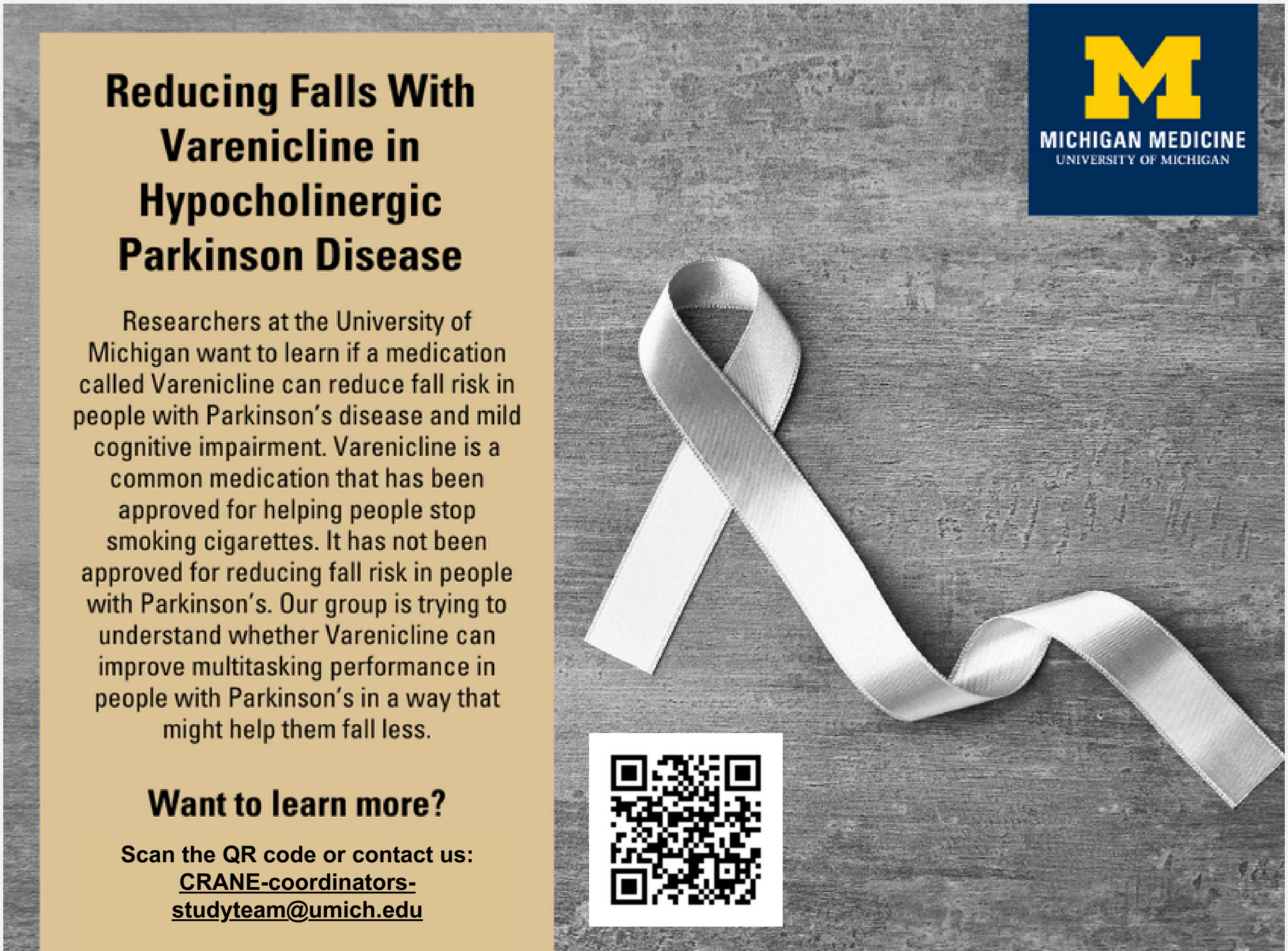
When: September 16, 1 - 3:00 pm
Where: Trinity Health Grand Rapids, 245 Cherry St. SE, Grand Rapids

Traverse City Session:

When: November 18, 6:00 pm
Where: Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers, 4000 Eastern Sky Dr. Traverse City

Coming soon: Monroe, MI!

For more information and registration, visit: bit.ly/pd101mpf



Reducing Falls With Varenicline in Hypocholinergic Parkinson Disease

MICHIGAN MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Researchers at the University of Michigan want to learn if a medication called Varenicline can reduce fall risk in people with Parkinson’s disease and mild cognitive impairment. Varenicline is a common medication that has been approved for helping people stop smoking cigarettes. It has not been approved for reducing fall risk in people with Parkinson’s. Our group is trying to understand whether Varenicline can improve multitasking performance in people with Parkinson’s in a way that might help them fall less.

Want to learn more?

Scan the QR code or contact us:
CRANE-coordinators-studyteam@umich.edu

MPF Fun Run 2025

On June 4, the fifth annual MPF Fun Run was held on Harsens Island, raising over **$250,000**, for a cumulative total of **$850,000** since its inception. These funds support Parkinson's families across our four pillars: community, exercise, education, and respite. Highlights of the event include 62 boats, 370 boaters, a competitive Rolex watch raffle, and 45 sponsors, including several new partners. We appreciate the support of the event's four stops: The Old Club, North Channel Yacht Club, Brown's Bar, and Cabana Blue Sports Bar and Grill.

The event was made possible with the support and hard work of the presenting sponsors, Dave, Matt, and Jake Floore with Lance Industries, Danny Lichocki of A-Line Staffing Solutions, and Randy and Randal Pagel of Bumler Mechanical.

Save the date for the 6th annual Fun Run: **Wednesday, June 3, 2026**. Registration will open in early 2026.

We would like to thank our generous sponsors for their continued support!

Presenting Sponsors:

A-LINE STAFFING SOLUTIONS
BUMLER MECHANICAL
LANCE Industries

Title Sponsor:

WC BEARDSLEE RACK & STORAGE

Hope in Every Step: 2025 Metro Detroit Symposium

On April 25, more than 450 attendees gathered at Laurel Manor in Livonia for MPF's annual Metro Detroit Symposium, themed Hope in Every Step. The day brought together people with Parkinson's, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and advocates for education, movement, and connection.

Highlights included an energizing Parkinson's Dance session, keynote speaker Dr. Michael S. Okun presenting The Parkinson's Plan, a powerful Caregiver Panel, and engaging movement demonstrations. Attendees also heard from Dr. Christos Sidiropoulos on emerging treatments and explored innovative walking aids with Michael Colling.

The day closed with raffle giveaways, including a U-Step Walker and Laser Cane, leaving participants inspired and hopeful.

In Partnership with: WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY Supernus Pharmaceuticals

To view the recorded presentations from the event, visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@MichiganParkinsonFoundation

Finding Joy Through Art

When Jerry Howell was diagnosed with Parkinson’s, he described it as “a thief in the night,” taking away things he once took for granted. But instead of giving in, Jerry pushed back through painting.

What began with a simple acrylic paint set from his daughter has become a passion. “When I paint, my mind focuses less on the tremor and more on creativity,” Jerry shared.

In July, Jerry hosted an art show at Portage City Hall and generously donated half the proceeds to MPF. His story reminds us that Parkinson’s does not define what’s possible.

“The key is to push back. To replace what you can’t do with what you can do.”

Thank you, Jerry, for sharing your art, your words, and your heart with all of us.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your feedback helps shape the future of MPF’s programs, services, and events. Please take a few minutes to complete our annual Programs and Services Survey and let us know how we can better support you and the Parkinson’s community across Michigan.

Visit: bit.ly/mpfsurvey25

Or scan the code:

HOPE ON THE FIELD GALA

Tackling Parkinson's Together

NOVEMBER 7, 2025
FORD FIELD, DETROIT

Tickets: bit.ly/mpfgala2025

WALK WITH A PURPOSE.

PARKINSON
HERO
WALK
Michigan Parkinson Foundation

2025 LINEUP:

Traverse City Walk:
August 23
Civic Center
Traverse City, MI

Metro Detroit Walk:
September 13
Jimmy Johns Field
Utica, MI

Lansing Walk:
September 27
Hawk Island Park,
Lansing, MI

Grand Rapids Walk:
October 11
Aquinas College,
Grand Rapids, MI

PARKINSON HERO WALK SEASON IS HERE!

The Parkinson Hero Walks are more than just community events. They are a **celebration of strength, unity, and hope**. These pledge-based walks raise critical funds that support the Michigan Parkinson Foundation's programs, most of which are offered at no cost to those who need them.

Whether you are walking for yourself, in honor of a loved one, or in memory of someone you have lost, your steps make a difference. From individuals with Parkinson's to care partners, family members, friends, and healthcare professionals—**you are all heroes**. Your courage in facing Parkinson's every day inspires us all.

Each walk promises a day filled with connection, inspiration, and purpose. There is no pressure to walk if that is not right for you. There are many opportunities to engage, connect, and celebrate with the community throughout the day. Come early for warm-ups and exercise demonstrations, enjoy the event at your own pace, and know that just showing up makes an impact.

Every dollar raised helps ensure that ***no one in Michigan faces Parkinson's alone.***

Register Today!

Visit our website: bit.ly/MPF2025walks

Or scan the code:

WALK AS A ***HERO.***

Top Five Reasons to Join a Walk!

1. Raise Awareness
The Hero Walks are a powerful way to spread awareness of Parkinson’s and highlight the resources available in our Michigan communities.

2. Promote an Active Lifestyle
Exercise is the only proven intervention to slow the progression of Parkinson’s. Whether you walk one mile or three, it’s a great reason to stay active. Many participants even “train” throughout the year to walk alongside their friends, families, and teammates. All mobility levels are welcome.

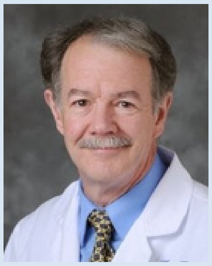
3. Enjoy the Connection
Living with Parkinson’s can be isolating, but the Walk is a day of joy, community, and celebration. Expect hugs, smiles, laughter, and maybe even a few happy tears. It’s a chance to reconnect and make lifelong friendships.

4. Give Back
Many Walkers participate to honor the support they’ve received. Your fundraising efforts go directly toward MPF’s four mission pillars: Community, Education, Exercise, and Respite.

5. Celebrate Your Heroes
The Walk honors all Parkinson’s heroes from individuals living with PD and their care partners to support groups, healthcare professionals, and loved ones we’ve lost. This is your chance to be bold, proud, and loud in celebrating the people who inspire you.

Hospital care in Parkinson's disease: A systematic review and expert consensus recommendations from the Parkinson's Foundation

Peter A. LeWitt MD, MMedSc
Sastry Foundation Endowed Chair in Parkinson Disease Research
Wayne State University School of Medicine



A longstanding challenge for people with Parkinsonism (PwP) has been how to do well when hospitalized. Whether for an acute problem or a planned procedure (like joint surgery), a PwP sometimes finds a medication regimen substantially disrupted by the experience of having the hospital system take over medication administration. Other features of the hospital experience can also impose difficulties of various sorts.

The Michigan Parkinson Foundation has addressed this concern in the past by producing training videos for educating hospital and nursing home staff about the importance of providing medications on time and other aspects of living with PD. Recently, the national Parkinson's Foundation took on the task of analyzing the hospital experience for PwP with a detailed review of what has been studied about this longstanding problem. The results of this extensive review have just been accepted for publication (and this article will be freely available to the public in the following journal, Parkinsonism and Related Disorders – Clinical Practice):

> Veilleux Carpentier A, Malaty IA, LeWitt PA, Azmi H, Brooks A, Pollak E, Air EL, Simpson H, Thomas J, Thomas FP, Cocoziello L, Rosenfeld A, Okun MD: A systematic review of the Parkinson's Foundation hospital care recommendations.

This report starts with the recognition that some PwP can experience medication errors, undesirable periods of immobility, and exacerbation of swallowing difficulties during hospitalization. The consequences can be various types of complications and more prolonged hospital stays. Consequently, the healthcare system in a hospital needs to implement evidence-based policy recommendations for improving care to improve outcomes (including healthcare costs). The team that produced this report (I was one of the authors) systematically reviewed the medical literature on Parkinson's disease hospitalization to learn as much as possible about what has been studied in this regard. From this information (and with the help of the Parkinson's Foundation staff), consensus recommendations for inpatient care were devised, focusing on key issues: Parkinson's disease medication management in the hospital, ensuring safe mobility and exercise, and (if needed) guidance on swallowing problems.

From the world literature on Parkinson's disease, the team selected for review a group of 33 publications that have studied these matters. Several of them documented that the frequency of medication errors (particularly delayed or omitted doses and inappropriate prescribing of drugs that block the effectiveness of Parkinson's disease medications) was common. Such efforts were sometimes associated with longer hospital stays, deterioration in mobility, and even increased mortality in PwP. Various Interventions (such as medical record alerts, better staff education, and the creation of specialized Parkinson disease hospital units were found to reduce medication errors. There has been only a limited study of how to address the challenges of prolonged immobility and swallowing disorders during hospitalization. However, the evidence to date suggests that PwP face an increased risk of falls, aspiration pneumonia, and other outcomes that require special attention during hospitalizations.

The message that comes through from this expert review is that hospital care of all types needs improvement because of multiple reasons. Foremost is the lack of understanding and sensitivity to the special needs of PwP (whose sometimes complicated medication regimens, variability in symptoms from hour to hour, risk for falls and swallowing difficulties, cognitive problems, and sleep disruptions, and increased sensitivity to various stressful situations such as pain and new dietary regimens) all call for careful planning. This topic has always been a useful topic of shared experiences and discussion at support group meetings. The message from the many gaps in optimal care during hospitalizations is that planning in advance (if possible) and enhancing good communications with hospital staff is important for a safe and comfortable experience.

To view MPF's caregiver training video series mentioned above, visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@MichiganParkinsonFoundation

To discuss how to prepare for a hospital visit, call MPF's Director of Social Services, Stephanie Woznak LMSW, at 248-419-7170.

A MESSAGE FROM: QUEST RESEARCH INSTITUTE ALCANZA SITE NETWORK

Summer Updates and Opportunities in Parkinson's Research

We hope this message finds you well and that you are enjoying the beauty of this warm and vibrant summer! At Quest Research, we are humbled and excited to continue our mission of advancing scientific understanding and therapeutic development in neurology.

Our Commitment to Parkinson's Research

At Quest Research, we are actively involved in 10 groundbreaking research studies focused on Parkinson's disease. As always, no insurance is required, and all study-related expenses are covered at no cost!

Current Parkinson's Studies

Newly Diagnosed: For individuals aged 45–80 who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's within the last two years and are not currently taking medication. These studies aim to explore treatments that may slow disease progression.

Gene Therapy: Participants aged 45–75 who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's for 4–12 years may qualify for a gene therapy study. Gene therapy is a surgical procedure that delivers material into a person's cells to treat or prevent disease. This treatment may stabilize or improve Parkinson's motor symptoms associated with Parkinson's.

Off-Time: A study focusing on oral medications that may help improve "on-time" for individuals with Parkinson's.

Upcoming: Study for Apokyn Users

Stay Connected

To stay updated on our research endeavors, findings, and upcoming opportunities, please feel free to reach out. Your partnership and support inspire us to push boundaries and aim for breakthroughs that matter. Please call 248-957-8940 and speak with one of our research specialists. Together, we can create a brighter future and make a difference!

Warm regards,
Quest Research Team

Participant Spotlight: Tim Dougan

Tim Dougan has been a research participant at Quest since 2017. Recently nominated for a national award by the Global Alzheimer's Platform, Tim shared his perspective on why he joined Parkinson's research studies:

"I became involved with the clinical trial when I was first diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2017. My approach was simple. I could sit back and let the disease take its normal course and do nothing, or become involved to try to make a difference in my life, but also in the lives of those who will be diagnosed in the future. At some stage, new medications need to be tested on human participants. Just think of the number of medications we would not have today if people did not volunteer for the trials. If not me, who? If not now, when? This is something I'll never regret doing, whatever the outcome happens to be."

"The most rewarding aspect of being involved is the possibility that the medication I am testing may someday make life and daily living easier for a Parkinson's Patient. The trial may not be testing a cure, but if it makes living with the disease a little easier, I feel that is a successful outcome. With so many different symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, any medication, surgical procedure, or some other relief would be welcome."

"The most challenging aspect of being in the clinical trial is not knowing how things are progressing because it is a double-blind study. I have had 3 DAT scans and do not know the results of any of them. This is disappointing but something I knew was going to happen when I signed the consent form. Also, it is challenging knowing that someday the study will be over and the many clinical staff I've met throughout the years will no longer be part of my life. They know so much about me; they become like part of my family, sharing with them my successes or challenges at my monthly visits."

PARTNERS IN PARKINSON'S

Partners in Parkinson's is a story-sharing project that highlights how Parkinson's impacts not only those living with the disease but also the care partners, loved ones, professionals, and advocates who support them.

In the following stories, we're proud to feature two individuals who have turned their personal connection to Parkinson's into purpose and support for others: Vicki Born and Karen Pence.

Find the Care Team you Need

Vicki Born learned a great deal about caregiving in the 20 years that her husband, Greg Powell, lived with Parkinson's disease. Despite being diagnosed at age 50, Greg's symptoms were mild for many years. It wasn't until Greg received general anesthesia for a hip replacement that things began to change.

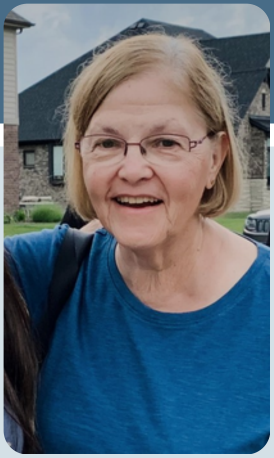
After the surgery, Greg went into a psychosis. He experienced hallucinations and temporary paralysis. Vicki learned that patients with PD can be more prone to side effects from general anesthesia, something that she and Greg were not aware of before the surgery.

The six years after Greg's surgery were markedly different than the years he lived with PD before the surgery. Cognitively, Greg never returned to his pre-surgery self. Vicki learned the importance of finding a doctor that she and Greg could both rely on through these tough years. "I can't stress enough how important it is to find a movement disorder specialist as opposed to a general neurologist," Vicki says. "The best advice I can provide to any caregiver is to find a movement disorder specialist that you trust and that will spend time with you and your loved one."

Vicki also recommends finding a support group. "It was an eye-opening experience when I attended my first support group and heard other caregivers talking about the same situations I was experiencing. I found wonderful friends through MPF's caregiver support group," Vicki says.

Greg passed away in September of 2024. Vicki often thinks about Greg's positive outlook throughout his battle with PD. "Even in the hardest times, Greg had a positive attitude," she says. To honor Greg's memory, and because Vicki understands firsthand the cost of in-home care, Vicki supports MPF's respite care program. Her contributions will help another family afford in-home care for their loved one.

Respond to What Touches Your Heart



Karen Pence taught preschoolers with special needs for many years. As a teacher, she was in the habit of asking questions and searching for answers and resources. In February 2024, Karen couldn’t understand the extreme fatigue she was experiencing. She went to her annual appointment with a neurologist whom she had been seeing to treat her headaches. During her appointment, her neurologist asked Karen to walk down a hall and then to imitate various hand and finger movements. Karen was stunned when she was told that she had Parkinson's disease. She had no family history of PD.

Karen had helped two friends during their journeys with Parkinson's. She knew that it was urgent to do something. She set her sights on getting an appointment with a Motor Movement Specialist ASAP. It took 9 long months to accomplish that goal. In the meantime, Karen registered to attend a PD conference in Ann Arbor.

At the conference, Karen met Julia Wall, Director of Education at MPF. Julia encouraged Karen to attend the PD 101 class as well as support groups. Karen learned about the importance of exercise and began exploring various in-person and Zoom classes. It didn’t take long for Karen to realize that the MPF staff was a small but mighty team and a wonderful resource.

One of the most unique endeavors Karen learned about was Julia’s initiative to invite Movement Disorder Specialists across Michigan to an evening of connection, collaboration, education, and dinner. Each physician was encouraged to bring a medical student, a resident, or a fellow to expand the next generation of Movement Disorder Specialists in Michigan. Karen was inspired to donate to the dinner. Julia noted that this aided in the success of the gathering.

Karen encourages everyone to respond to the things that touch their heart: The Hero walks, the Symposium, The Gala, the respite care, the Classes, the dinner with doctors, and the support groups. Amazing things are possible when we work together!

Did you know that August is National Make-A-Will Month?

Creating a will is an important piece of planning for the future. A will allows you to decide how your assets will be distributed, and who will manage the process after your death. Making a will ensures that your loved ones know your wishes.

Here are three reasons every adult should have a will:

1. Without a will, Michigan law will determine how your estate is distributed. The process will be managed through probate court. This may or may not align with your personal wishes.

2. A will can provide your family members with instructions about how to divide your assets and celebrate your life. Eliminating the need to make these decisions can be very helpful for grieving family members and reduce conflict about “who gets what.”

3. A will gives you the option to support a cause or organization that you care about. You can designate a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to support the Michigan Parkinson Foundation after your death. As an organization funded entirely on donations, gifts like these are critical to the work that MPF does in the Parkinson’s community.

Get started:
If you don’t have a will, you can contact an estate planning attorney to begin the process, or you can create a will online using a free tool like FreeWill or a paid service like Legal Zoom.

Questions or need more info? Contact Lisa Anga, Philanthropic Advisor, at Langa@ParkinsonsMI.org.

A Step Ahead: The U-Step Walker’s Role in Parkinson’s Mobility

When it comes to mobility aids for Parkinson’s, not all walkers are created equal. The U-Step Walker was specifically designed with neurological conditions in mind, offering unmatched stability, control, and confidence.

We caught up with Jonathan Miller, founder of InStep Mobility and inventor of the U-Step Walker, to hear the full story behind its creation and how this innovative design is helping people with Parkinson’s walk more safely and live more independently.

Q: How did the U-Step Walker come to be?

About 35 years ago, my mother developed mobility issues from a neurological condition called Charcot-Marie-Tooth. Despite physical therapy, braces, and a traditional walker, she was still struggling and losing her independence.

Coming from a family of engineers, I began thinking: what if I could create something that gave her more stability, something that mimicked the support she felt when holding onto a wall or another person? That’s how the concept for the U-Step was born.

Q: What makes the U-Step different from a typical walker?

The biggest difference is stability. The U-Step has a unique U-shaped base with 75% of its weight at the bottom, which significantly reduces the risk of tipping. Traditional walkers distribute weight evenly, which can be dangerous for people with balance issues.

It also features a reverse braking system, meaning it won’t move unless you squeeze the hand brakes, putting the user in full control.

Q: Does the U-Step help with freezing of gait?

Yes—and we’ve designed it specifically to do so. The U-Step provides a physical cue, which helps reduce freezing on its own. But we took it a step further by creating a laser cueing module that projects a red line onto the floor in front of the user. That visual line helps many people “unlock” their movement when freezing occurs.

U-STEP Neuro

Q: When should someone start using a walker like the U-Step?

Most people wait too long. There’s a stigma that comes with using a walker, but the truth is, the earlier you start, the better. There’s a learning curve to using something like the U-Step, especially because of the reverse braking system. It’s better to learn it while you’re still feeling confident than to wait until a fall forces the decision.

Looking for a U-Step? MPF has a loan closet available with a variety of mobility devices!

Contact Stephanie Woznak at 248-419-7170 for more information.

To watch the full interview with Jonathan Miller, visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@MichiganParkinsonFoundation

To learn more about the U-Step Walker, visit: www.ustep.com

Or call 1-800-558-7837 to speak with their knowledgeable customer service team.

Meet Your Exercise Goals!

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes of exercise per week. To help you reach this goal, we've created a weekly plan with suggestions to keep you on track. The plan is divided into four key categories. Simply check off the exercises you complete each day and record your total minutes! Pro Tip: Cut out this page and stick it on your refrigerator or another place you frequently look as a reminder to keep moving!

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	TH	FRI	SAT
Aerobic Activity - 30 minutes for 3 days per week							
Brisk Walk Outside							
Ride a Bike Outside							
High Knees Standing or Sitting (set of 20 and repeat)							
Lateral Shuffles hands on counter or table for balance support (4-6 steps to the right and left, for a total of 10 and repeat)							
Strength Training - 30 minutes - 2-3 days per week							
Sit to Stands (set of 20 and repeat)							
Planks on the floor or wall (hold for 10 seconds and add 10 seconds each week, repeat 2-3 times)							
Front and lateral shoulder raises with weights/soup can/etc. (work up to 3 sets of 10)							
Bird Dogs on all 4’s or in chair (2-3 sets of 10-20)							
Balance, Agility, & Multitasking - 2-3 days per week							
Tandem Walk forward and backward (hold onto counter, urban poles, or table to help with balance)							
Lift knee 12 times trying to not touch foot to the floor, change sides, say the months at the same time							
PWR! Step: Pass a ball or towel around your body							
PWR! Rock: Toss a scarf or small ball and try to catch it in the same hand							
Flexibility - 2-3 days per week of sustained stretch							
Side bends (Standing, seated)							
Hip Flexor and Quad Stretch (Standing, seated, or side/stomach lying)							
Chest stretch (interlace fingers behind back and pull your shoulder blades down)							
Spinal twist (seated or lying on floor)							
Total Number of Minutes:							

The Michigan Parkinson Foundation strongly recommends that you consult with your physician before beginning any exercise program. If you have questions, please reach out to our Director of Exercise, Deb Colling at dcolling@parkinsonsmi.org.

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OUR PILLARS: Providing Hope in Every Step of Your Journey

COMMUNITY

You are not in this alone. With over 70 support groups across Michigan and our mentorship program, we can connect you with someone who understands.

EDUCATION

We are dedicated to spreading awareness and providing educational resources for people with Parkinson's and their families.

EXERCISE

Exercise is linked to slower progression of Parkinson's and can help manage symptoms. Join us for virtual or in-person exercise classes or take part in our walkathon events.

RESPITE

We provide respite care assistance, medication assistance, care consultations, mindfulness programs, and other resources for caregivers.

Detach Here

Yes, I want to support families living with Parkinson’s

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