



# CAPITAL AREA PARKINSON'S SOCIETY

(512) 371-3373

[www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org)

SEPTEMBER 2010



## SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY MEETING

This September, we welcome Dina Mostow, CGW, LVN who works with Oliver Home Healthcare Agency. She'll one of her "most asked" for presentations, Laughter is the Best Medicine! People who have heard it, thoroughly enjoyed it, plus we should all laugh more, right?! We invite you all to join us on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm.

**New Location:** Riverbend Church in the Quads from 2:00-4:00pm. The address is 4124 N. Capital of Texas Hwy (Hwy 360), Austin, 78746.

The Quads are located on the west side of the campus, off Cedar Street. There are well-marked signs leading to the Quads, should you take another entrance.

## SUPPORT GROUP CORNER

\*\*\*Check [www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org) for more support group \*\*\*

The newest group added is in Southwest Austin at *Querencia Barton Creek*. Meetings consist of speakers and informal discussions. Its focus will be on education, available resources and having a good quality of life. Querencia Outreach meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month at 2:30pm at Querencia at Barton Creek in The Plaza. The address is 2500 Barton Creek, Austin, 78735. Questions: Robin Friar - (512) 610-9401 at Querencia or Susie Lightfoot Scherr - (512) 345-1380, [lightfoot\\_78759@yahoo.com](mailto:lightfoot_78759@yahoo.com).

*Solo with Parkinson's* meets on September 20th, from 12:30-2, for lunch and conversation at the apartment of Ann Kriss, 4100 Jackson Ave., Apt. 302, Austin 78731.

Please call Ann to let her know that you're coming: (512) 371-7484. For more information, call Lydia Blanchard, (512) 445-2478.

## VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Vietnam Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today, August 31, published its final regulation establishing Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart condition, and B-cell leukemia's as service-connected disabilities for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The final regulation grants a 100% disability rating for Parkinson's disease, as well as retroactive veteran and survivor payments for qualifying veterans.

For more information, look for this title on the main page at [www.parkinsonsaction.org](http://www.parkinsonsaction.org). If you haven't applies for VA Benefits, go to <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>

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## CAPS Cookbook

Send your favorites recipes for the CAPS *NEW* Cookbook. Include all the ingredients, specific directions, contact information and preferable, Parkinson's friendly dishes. Send via email to Susie Scherr: [lightfoot\\_78759@yahoo.com](mailto:lightfoot_78759@yahoo.com) or by mail to CAPS PO Box 27565, Austin, TX 78755-2565



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## Scientists working to develop vaccine for Parkinson's disease

Source: University of Texas, Health Science Center at Houston

"We're creating a vaccine to target a protein that accumulates in the brains of people with Parkinson's disease," said Rowen Chang, Ph.D., who is the professor leading the research project at the [UTHealth Brown Foundation Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases](#) (IMM). "If we can slow the protein buildup, I believe we will also slow the deterioration of nerve cells tied to body movement." The protein is alpha synuclein.

People with Parkinson's disease may appear to be fixed in their facial expressions, stooped forward in their posture and may even appear to be intoxicated to others because of their postural instability. While there is no cure, the symptoms of Parkinson's disease can be treated effectively. Parkinson's disease is the second most common of the progressive neurological diseases, affecting 1 percent of the population over the age of 60.

For years, vaccines have been used to protect people from diseases like rubella and measles by stimulating their immune systems. So, why not develop a therapeutic vaccine for Parkinson's disease?

When a person gets vaccinated, he or she is injected with a tiny amount of an agent linked to a disease, said Chang, who is collaborating on the project with UTHealth researcher and assistant professor Chuantao Jiang, M.D., Ph.D. As soon as the immune system recognizes this agent, it begins to produce antibodies to attack it. The agents that trigger this process are called immunogens.

Building on pre-clinical vaccine research by others demonstrating that reducing alpha synuclein buildup also reduces nerve damage, Chang and Jiang have developed an approach that they believe will be more effective in reducing alpha synuclein levels and therefore provide a more effective form of Parkinson's disease therapy.

Their work is supported by a grant from [The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research](#), founded by Emmy Award-winning actor Michael J. Fox, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1991.

Chang and Jiang, who work in the [UTHealth Center for Protein Chemistry](#), have developed a vaccine and are in the process of testing its safety and effectiveness in a mouse model that expresses the human alpha synuclein protein.

The first part of their study involved a comparison of three different immunogens. "We have found a highly promising immunogen that may prevent the alpha synuclein aggregation," Jiang said. The next step is gauging the effects of the immunogen in a mouse model.

If the immunogen works in mice, clinical trials could be in the offing, Chang said.

"I hope a cure for Parkinson's will be forthcoming in my lifetime," said Nina Brown, who describes her battle with Parkinson's disease in a video titled "[Hope](#)." "If not, it is my hope that it will be there for future generations."

