



# Capital Area Parkinson's Society

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

512-371-3373

capitalareaparkinsons.org

## A Word from CAPS President:

Welcome to Parkinson's Awareness Month!

April has been designated as a time dedicated to increasing awareness of Parkinson's disease, a condition that currently affects more than one million people in the United States and over ten million worldwide. While these figures represent diagnosed individuals, we believe that there are many undiagnosed individuals as well.

PD is a degenerative neurological disorder that affects the production of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is essential for fluid bodily movement. The chemical is anecdotally referred to as the lubricant for the nervous system.

In 1817, English surgeon, Dr. James Parkinson wrote an essay on a condition known as the Shaking Palsy. He was the first to describe "paralysis agitans" a condition that would later be renamed Parkinson's disease by French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot between 1868-1888. Some celebrities that have/had the condition include Michael J. Fox, Muhammed Ali, Billy Graham, Linda Ronstadt, Charles Shultz, Alan Alda and Neil Diamond.

This condition has intrigued and confounded neurologists for centuries and the research continues today. Parkinson's is the only neurologic condition where the symptoms are treatable with meds and thanks in large part to the impact of the Michael J. Fox foundation there are currently over 30 Drugs in development that mitigate the symptoms. Last year, 3 PD drugs were approved by the FDA. Just last month the FDA approved a new levodopa (artificial dopamine) named Dhivy. This pill can be broken into smaller pieces to promote more precise dosing that can eliminate "off times". As a PD'er I am all for anything that can flatten the peaks and valleys of the med cycles.

CAPS started in 1984 as a small group of individuals who were caring for their loved ones with PD. This small "support group" met in individual's homes. After several years of these informal meetings, Kitty Hoskins and Susie Lightfoot Scherr were instrumental in guiding these sessions to become more supportive and growing it into a working board of volunteers. Thank you Kitty and Susie for your continuing contributions. Our mission is still the same.

If you or any member of your family is dealing with PD please take a moment to check out [our website](#) for valuable information. In addition there are informative videos on [our YouTube channel](#).

Be well,  
Victor

# Articles of Interest

## [Treatment for Parkinson's could now get even better](#)

Source: University of Copenhagen - The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

Specialized groups of neurons within the brainstem control movement. Now researchers have found that activation of such neurons is sufficient to restore full movement function in mice with symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. The study helps clinicians to focus Deep Brain Stimulation to the right therapeutic spot and hopefully could improve treatment of motor symptoms in Parkinson's Disease.

[Read more](#)/click here

## [New Levodopa Pill Hits Pharmacy Shelves](#)

From the Michael J Fox Foundation

Avian Pharmaceuticals' Dhivy can be taken whole or snapped in half or quarters for more precise dosing.

Levodopa is one of the best medications to treat Parkinson's disease (PD), motor symptoms, including tremor, slowness, and stiffness.

[Read more](#)/click here



### **April Monthly Meeting Saturday, April 9 @ 2PM Live and Interactive with Ryan Kochanski, MD**

**Note: Due to Easter Weekend this month's meeting will be held on the 2nd Saturday**

**Asleep, MRI-guided Deep Brain Stimulation**  
[Zoom link will be posted live on the CAPS website the day of the meeting.](#)

Ryan Kochanski, MD is a neurosurgeon with Methodist Physicians | Neurology Specialists in San Antonio, Texas. He is the Director of Stereotactic, Functional and Epilepsy Neurosurgery.

Dr. Kochanski provides surgery for a broad range of brain and spine conditions including brain tumors, movement disorders, epilepsy, trigeminal neuralgia and spinal disorders. He specializes in deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's disease, dystonia and essential tremor. His research interests include the use of brain stimulation for movement disorders, difficult to treat epilepsy as well as mood disorders such as OCD and depression. He has authored numerous journal articles and book chapters pertaining to the above topics.

**CAPS Support Groups (Virtual & in person)**  
**Contact the office for more information**

\***Women Care Partner Group** meets Tuesdays– bi-weekly

\***People with Parkinson's Group** meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 3:00pm

\***Women & Men's Care Partner Group** meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 11:00am

\* **ATX Young Onset PD.** meets every month. Go to [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) to join the group and see what's happening



With COVID restrictions and guidelines changing in our community we are looking at ways to get back to in-person meetings and support groups as well as some other fun social activities.

Keeping this in mind that some folks may still feel leery, we will do everything possible to keep everyone safe.

Also some may decide they'd like to continue participating virtually; we understand and respect that choice therefore we will continue to have our virtual support groups and are in the process of finding a way that folks can participate in our monthly meetings as well as recording them for future viewing in case you miss them. Please stay tuned.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email please email the office at

[info@capitalareaparkinsons.org](mailto:info@capitalareaparkinsons.org)