

News Release

New online tool trains doctors to diagnose and treat Parkinson's

TORONTO, ON, December 2, 2014 – Parkinson Society Canada is proud to launch its first online learning module accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and available at www.parkinsonclinicalguidelines.ca/education. The module, offered at no cost, enables healthcare professionals to work through practical case scenarios. Family doctors will gain insight into key clinical challenges that can be applied to their own patient management. The content is based on the 84 recommendations from the *Canadian Guidelines on Parkinson's Disease*.

“This program teaches physicians to consistently identify the clinical signs and symptoms of Parkinson's so that they can make early referrals to a specialist and helping to improve the quality of care for their patients. Participants can also pose questions about the module content and receive guidance from medical experts,” says Grace Ferrari, National Manager, Professional and Public Education, Parkinson Society Canada.

The module serves as a companion resource to the *Canadian Guidelines on Parkinson's Disease*, and related reference tools, all released in 2012. The learning module covers commonly known motor symptoms, as well as non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's, which patients report most adversely affect their quality of life and are gaining importance in the patient/health professional dialogue. The online learning module was developed by Parkinson Society Canada with input from its Medical Advisory Committee, comprised of experts including neurologists, movement disorders specialists and family doctors.

Professionals from a variety of health disciplines can take advantage of the module's transferable content to further their continuing professional education and training. Although the module is geared towards healthcare professionals, anyone with an interest is welcome to use the resource to become better informed about Parkinson's. Participants can access the online course through a secure login and registration process.

About the *Canadian Guidelines on Parkinson's Disease*

The *Canadian Guidelines on Parkinson's Disease* provides healthcare professionals with a detailed understanding to guide the early diagnosis and ongoing treatment of Parkinson's disease. The guidelines are relevant to a broad range of health professionals including: family physicians, neurologists, nurses, movement disorders specialists, gerontologists, allied health professionals (e.g. occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists) and other specialists. The guidelines, endorsed by the Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, were published for the first time in 2012 and are available at www.parkinsonclinicalguidelines.ca.

What is Parkinson's disease?

Parkinson's is a chronic degenerative neurological disease caused by a loss of dopamine in the brain. There is currently no cure. Motor symptoms include resting tremor, slowness of movement, stiffness or rigidity of muscles, difficulty with balance and walking, changes in voice volume and speech, and difficulty with fine movements. Non-motor symptoms include depression, loss of sense of smell, sleep disturbances and cognitive changes. The average age of onset is 60, but it can affect people as young as 30 or 40. The Parkinson's population in Canada will grow to 99,000 by 2016 and will double by 2031.

About Parkinson Society Canada

Parkinson Society Canada is the national voice of Canadians living with Parkinson's. Since 1965, Parkinson Society Canada, in collaboration with regional partners and 240 chapters and support groups, provides support services, education, advocacy and research funding to improve the quality of life and ultimately find a cure, for Canadians living with Parkinson's and other related conditions including Parkinson Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) and Multiple System Atrophy (MSA).

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Contact: Kelly Mills
416-227-9700, ext. 3469 or 1-800-565-3000; ext. 3469
Kelly.mills@parkinson.ca