

For immediate release

200 years later, improved awareness and treatment of Parkinson's disease needed

Vancouver, BC – April 3, 2017 – This year marks the 200th anniversary of the publication titled *An Essay on the Shaking Palsy* by British physician James Parkinson. It broke ground by being the first paper to describe, in detail, the symptoms of Parkinson's disease (PD), potential causes, treatment and means to a cure. Now, the Parkinson's community is looking back on 200 years of disease research, management and public perception. Recognizing that there is still work to be done to improve patient outcomes, Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) is committed to emphasizing the diversity of the Parkinson's community while drawing attention to the issues affecting people with Parkinson's here and now. We're in this together.

April is internationally recognized as Parkinson's Awareness Month. With the goal of reshaping the public's understanding of PD and how it affects today's British Columbians, the Society is launching a campaign called, *This is Parkinson's disease*. "Parkinson's disease is life-altering, but it is not without hope," explains Jean Blake, CEO of PSBC. "Although it is the second most common neuro-degenerative disorder, it is one of the most treatable. We experienced significant success this year with the Ministry of Health announcing the funding of Duodopa therapy for British Columbians deemed clinically appropriate; however, there are still a number of major issues that we will continue to push for improvements on, including: developing a provincial Parkinson's disease strategy, adding specialized staff to existing Parkinson's disease programs, funding Parkinson's-specific training for health professionals and expanding the deep brain stimulation program."

This is Parkinson's disease brings together the stories of real individuals to highlight the issues they face, and the strength that lies in the community's diversity. The Society encourages the public to look out for images of Hilary, Richard, Wayne and Elaine in newspapers, transit and various public spaces around the province. To learn more about the campaign, including how to get involved, visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/this-is-parkinsons.

About Parkinson Society British Columbia

Parkinson Society British Columbia's purpose is to ease the burden and find a cure for Parkinson's disease through advocacy, education, research and support services. The Society receives no government funding and is supported entirely by the generosity of individual donors and members, corporations, foundations and the dedicated efforts of volunteers. Established in 1969, PSBC is a not-for-profit registered charity acting as the voice of British Columbians living with Parkinson's.

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You are not alone. We are here to help.