

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parkinson Society BC provides critical funding for expanding treatment of Parkinson's disease

KELOWNA, BC – JULY 7, 2020 – Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) has reached an agreement with the Interior Health Authority whereby the Society will provide funding for several allied healthcare professionals through the Okanagan Movement Disorder Program (www.okmove.ca). This funding, in the amount of \$445,000, will support a part-time physiotherapist, a part-time speech-language pathologist, and a part-time social worker for a period of 5 years. Funding for these positions will transition into the Health Authority's base budget in years 4 and 5.

Parkinson's disease (PD) is most prevalent in those over the age of 60. As the worldwide incidence of the disease is expected to double by 2040 due to the aging population, funding for more holistic treatment is more critical than ever. British Columbia is home to over 13,000 people living with the progressive neurological disorder – 2,400 of which live in the Interior Health Authority's region. This makes the Central Okanagan unique in that it has the highest crude prevalence rate of Parkinsonism in the province – increasing approximately 17% in the past 5 years.

Although pharmaceutical therapies are effective, they must be complemented by other interventions to prevent complications such as choking, social withdrawal due to communication impairment (softened speech), and caregiver burden. "Allied healthcare professionals provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to the care of people with Parkinson's disease," says Jean Blake, Chief Executive Officer, Parkinson Society BC. "By allowing people to live independently for longer, this not only improves quality of life, but reduces the overall impact on the healthcare system by decreasing hospital admissions due to issues such as aspiration or fractures."

A cooperative approach between the Interior Health Authority, Parkinson Society British Columbia, and the Okanagan Movement Disorder Program, has allowed for expedited hiring of allied healthcare professionals – bringing better care to people affected by Parkinson's disease in the region.

About Parkinson Society British Columbia

Established in 1969, Parkinson Society British Columbia serves to empower the Parkinson's community across the province by providing resources and services to enable self-management, self-reliance, and self-advocacy. Our purpose is to ease the burden through advocacy, education, and support services, while pursuing the search for a cure by investing in promising research. The Society is supported entirely by the generosity of individual donors, corporations, foundations, and the dedicated efforts of volunteers.



For more information, please contact:

Jean Blake, Chief Executive Officer

Phone: 604-662-3240

Toll-free: 1-800-668-3330

Email: jblake@parkinson.bc.ca

Website: www.parkinson.bc.ca