

Parkinson's Disease Support Group Forming

Local News

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HOQUIAM, Wash. - A support group is forming for Harborites affected by Parkinson's Disease. If you have Parkinson Disease or are a caregiver and would like to learn more about being part of a PD support group, please call Betsy Seidel at 533-5968.

The first PDSG meeting will be at the Hoquiam Timberland Library's downstairs meeting room tomorrow from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Parkinson Disease is a disorder of the brain that leads to shaking (tremors) and difficulty with walking, movement, and coordination. It is a progressive, neurodegenerative disorder that occurs when certain nerve cells in the brain die or become impaired. These nerve cells produce a vital substance known as dopamine, which is the chemical messenger responsible for smooth, coordinated function of the body's muscles and movement. The actor Michael J. Fox and the boxer Mohammed Ali are two prominent people who currently have PD.

Parkinson Disease affects about 1 in 100 Americans over the age of 60 years, which is also the average age of onset. While the illness is less common at younger ages, it does occur. It is estimated that five to ten percent of all persons with Parkinson Disease are diagnosed prior to age 40. It affects men and women in almost equal numbers and knows no social ethnic, economic, or geographic boundaries. This disease affects each patient differently, and there is no cure. In too many instances, PD patients and their caregivers feel isolated. A support group is a terrific way to share common experiences, suggestions for exercise and diet, resource ideas, and just enjoy companionship. If you have Parkinson Disease or are a caregiver and would like to learn more about being part of a PD support group that will be starting in Grays Harbor, please feel free to call Betsy Seidel at 533-5968.

The first PDSG meeting will be at the Hoquiam Timberland Library's downstairs meeting room on Tuesday, March 27 from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Also, the Oregon Health and Science University Parkinson Center is offering a therapy training to teach physical, occupational, and/or speech therapists how to help Parkinson patients. This training will take place on Friday, April 6 and Saturday, April 7 in Portland at OHSU. If you know of any therapist who would be interested in receiving information about this training, please contact Lisa Mann, RN at 503-494-5620 or by email at mannli@ohsu.edu. In addition, please let Betsy Seidel know if you'd be interested in attending the training in Portland.