

## YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM AND HOW TO ACCESS IT

### ***Family Physician***

- looks after your general medical care, annual physical examinations, and acute problems
- may treat your Parkinson's disease (PD), or otherwise stay in contact with your specialist

### ***Neurologist***

- a specialist physician who has completed a 3-year training program in the medical or surgical area of their choice in an accredited training program
- some focus on diseases such as PD, and other movement disorders
- will make or confirm the diagnosis of PD, recommend treatment, and monitor your progress
- two annual visits are recommended, particularly for medication management
- requires a referral from your general practitioner

### ***Movement Disorder Clinic***

- specializes in the holistic treatment of movement disorders like PD
- gives you access to a team of allied healthcare professionals including recreation and occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, etc.
- the Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre at UBC is a multi-disciplinary clinic available to BC residents

### ***Psychiatrist***

- diagnoses and treats mental disorders that occur in PD, including depression, anxiety, and disturbances in feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and cognitive processes
- treatments include psychotherapy, counselling, and medication
- requires a referral from a general practitioner or your neurologist

### ***Psychologist***

- trained to help you cope with the emotional impact of chronic illness
- techniques include psychotherapy and behaviour modification
- some specialize in sophisticated testing of cognitive changes
- some are associated with hospitals and clinics where their services are paid for by the BC Medical Services Plan, while private practice cost may be covered by extended benefit insurance plans
- no medical referral is required

### ***Clinical Nurse***

- located in movement disorder clinics across Canada, such as the Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre
- provide education and counselling on all aspects of PD and how it affects daily life, with ongoing care and help between clinic visits
- assists with adapting to medication and making dosage adjustments
- telephone counseling may help without the need of a clinic visit
- liaises with other members of your healthcare team

### ***Rehabilitation Therapist***

- assesses mobility, balance and posture, and prescribes exercise programs
- advises on suitable community-based sports or exercise programs

- offers techniques to improve walking, and teaches you and your family how to prevent and overcome problems such as falling
- when located in hospital, costs are covered by the Medical Services Plan
- community physiotherapy may be covered by extended healthcare plans

#### ***Speech Language Pathologist***

- can design a program to help you improve your communication
- often hospital-based, where medical referral is required
- some have private practices, and fees may be covered by extended healthcare plans

#### ***Occupational Therapist***

- addresses problems in the area of self-care, work, and leisure
- provides advice, instruction on adaptive equipment, safety awareness, and mobility issues
- their advice is valuable when purchasing assistive devices, or in-home adaptations, to avoid costly mistakes and ensure your purchase is tax deductible

#### ***Massage Therapist***

- provide short-term relief from muscle stiffness and rigidity
- based in private practice and not covered by the Medical Services Plan
- some extended benefit plans provide limited coverage for massage therapy services

#### ***Nutritionist or Dietician***

- helps you plan a healthy diet and advises you on how to prepare and enjoy your meals in ways that take your symptoms into account
- most hospitals have an outpatient dietician, covered by the Medical Services Plan
- physician referral may be required

#### ***Social Worker***

- helps with social, emotional, financial, and family concerns related to chronic illness
- trained in individual, family/marital counseling to address many of the changes that occur while adjusting to major medical illness, including long term care arrangements
- helps you get connected with the appropriate resources in your community
- located in hospitals and the community
- generally no charge for their services

#### ***Pharmacist***

- dispenses your prescription drugs and gives advice on over-the-counter medications and supplements, and provides additional information about your prescriptions
- if you are taking multiple drugs for multiple problems, you are less likely to encounter problems with incompatible drugs if all of your prescriptions are on file in **one** pharmacy

#### **Source**

Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.