

# **Aware in Care: Eliminating Disparities in Parkinson's Care**

**I**n working to meet the challenges of the underserved, the National Parkinson Foundation (NPF) is bringing *Aware in Care's* lifesaving messages to underserved communities by providing thousands of free hospitalization kits in low health literacy English and Spanish versions.

"The unfortunate reality in our country is that many people remain isolated and unable to access services in the healthcare system at large," said Joyce Oberdorf, NPF's President and CEO. "NPF is working to ensure that everyone—regardless of who they are, where they live, what language they speak or how much money they have—receives much-needed Parkinson's resources."



With more frequent hospital visits and a high sensitivity to the timing and dosing of Parkinson's medications, people with Parkinson's face great risks in the hospital. In 2012, NPF responded to the needs of the Parkinson's community by launching the *Aware in Care* program. Since then, NPF has distributed more than 25,000 *Aware in Care* hospitalization kits across the United States and launched a national awareness campaign encouraging patients and caregivers to, "Get the Kit. Know the Facts. Be *Aware in Care*."

"We know that three out of four individuals with Parkinson's do not get their medications as prescribed during hospitalization, which can lead to prolonged stays and complications," said Becky Dunlop, RN, a Nurse Coordinator for the Johns Hopkins Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center. "We also know that the health care delivered to non-English speaking individuals is dissimilar from care delivered to those who speak English, leading to disparate outcomes. Now, *Aware in Care* is taking the lead to address these well known challenges."



The new low health literacy English and Spanish versions of the kit are being distributed in targeted geographic regions in partnership with five NPF Centers of Excellence (Baltimore, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Washington, D.C.). Over our history of six decades, NPF has maintained a steady commitment to eliminating Parkinson's-related disparities in health care.

"If every individual living with Parkinson's uses this kit, we have the potential to educate at least one million health care providers, because the kit educates by doing the talking. Ultimately, this achievement will improve care for all people living with Parkinson's and go a long way in the elimination of health care disparities for everyone," Dunlop said.

The new kit is a self-advocacy tool that includes a guide to prepare the Parkinson's patient for a planned or an emergency hospital visit, a medical alert card, and a medication form to fill out and share with hospital staff.

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