

Remote Access to Care for Parkinson's Patients During Covid-19 Crisis

Dear Friends,

The Israel Parkinson's Association (IPA) was founded in 1993 by Parkinson's disease patients to support people impacted by Parkinson's disease and their caregivers and to promote scientific research to find a cure for the disease and improve patient's quality of life. We are the only organization caring exclusively for Parkinson's patients in Israel.

As you can imagine at this point in time, during the Corona virus, it is not advisable for people with Parkinson's to leave their homes and we don't see any prospect of this situation changing in the near future. During this confinement many of them are missing out on their important therapies and other activities that help them to cope with the disease.

We are therefore seeking urgent support towards our **Remote Access to Care Program**, a pioneering online service that enables Parkinson's patients to manage their symptoms and access care from the comfort of their homes. While this service was originally created to help people with Parkinson's disease living in remote and underserved areas and for patients with progressive stages of the disease that are bound to their homes and unable to travel it is now immediately urgent for all Parkinsons patients in Israel!

IPA's Remote Access Program provides rehabilitation services integrating symptoms management and patient and family education. This user-friendly system combines the ReAbility Online Platform developed by the Sheba Medical Center Rehabilitation Unit and Cisco Webex web conferencing and video conferencing applications.

The IPA's Remote Access to Care program provides the following services via videoconferencing and kinect camera:

- Motor-cognitive therapy
- Strategies for daily functioning (e.g. bathing, eating)
- Speech and swallowing therapy - new component that addresses communication and swallowing functions that are pervasive among Parkinson's patients
- Psychological counseling
- Lectures and webinars on Parkinson disease and life-style interventions

Services are provided by PD specialists from Sheba and Surousky Medical centers (physical therapists, occupational therapists, clinical psychologists from the Movements Disorders Unit, speech and language pathologists and allied health professionals).

IPA also plans to subsidize the platform installation in patients' homes for those who can't afford it.

Our immediate goal is to connect as many Parkinson's patients to the system that we can during this time. In terms of user engagement, our aim is to engage patients in at least one form of

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therapy weekly
and one webinar
weekly (user
engagement

depends on patients' disease

stage and condition). We will recruit new patients through outreach efforts led by IPAs branches (phone and email), social media, and health professionals.

While the coronavirus is supposedly going to stay with us for an indefinite period of time, along with the life threatening dangers it poses to the elderly population, our remote virtual care program is the only possible solution for Parkinson's patients; with it we can ensure that they will continue to receive services, maintain their quality of life and manage their chronic disease while reducing risk of infection at hospitals, clinics and medical offices.

We hope you will consider helping us fund this effort on behalf of the Parkinsons' Patients that we serve.

Sincerely,

Zion Azrad
Director of Development

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