



The Israel Parkinson Association – 2020 in Review & Looking Ahead to 2021

1.1.21

Dear Friends,

During 2020, The Israel Parkinson Association – IPA helped thousands of patients across the country, and their caregivers, to withstand the daily hardships of managing the chronic and progressive Parkinson's Disease (PD) by means of 17 national branches. This past year was particularly challenging due to the COVID-19 crisis, however we succeeded in sustaining and even improving our activities under social distancing regulations and a new reality. We adapted our social programming, provided emotional support and health and wellness activities, held webinars on PD and life-style interventions, and provided instrumental information on the latest treatments and patient rights, particularly in times of emergency. Especially this year, when patients experienced increased concern about COVID-19 risk and social isolation due to rigorous shielding measures and home confinement, we made great efforts to facilitate quality of life and ease patients' burden. At the same time, we invested in public advocacy to include medication and advanced treatments into the Health Basket and communicated the needs of IPA members to stakeholders.

We made changes to meet new and evolving conditions

Despite the pandemic, this year was marked by growth. For the first time, we appointed a paid Executive Director to lead the Association, and at the same time expanded activities. The number of Association members grew to 1,700, of which 150 joined throughout 2020. As a leading source of information on PD, IPA held conferences, expert panels and lectures for members via synchronous videoconferencing, and participated in online medical conferences. We launched *Parkinnet*, an online platform delivering allied health therapies such as Physiotherapy, Feldenkrais and Pilates, and subsidized participation fees to encourage engagement. These accessible activities, administered by practitioners from the community with expertise in PD, ensured that patients maintained a routine of physical exercise, which is important to their health and sense of wellbeing.

We developed organization capacity to make a bigger impact

The new management brought an inspiring and future-focused outlook to our Association, which is aided by a community of 70 dedicated volunteers and strategic fundraising. Throughout the year, we increased public awareness of PD and facilitated access to updated information, increased membership volume, held wellbeing and health promotion activities, and advocated towards the establishment of national PD clinics, especially in Israel's periphery.

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Looking ahead to 2021

We are making firm plans for the future. In the upcoming 2 years, we will continue expansion efforts with a focus on increasing Association membership – PD patients, their caregivers and close friends. Our aim is to reach a 15% increase in membership and a 15% increase in activity engagement. We are already immersed in enhancing the work of our branches and building the strength of our staff to prepare for ‘the day after’ COVID-19.

We will continue to promote the interests of the Parkinson’s community and advocate for expanding services and medication in the health basket, e.g., including Physiotherapy and Speech Therapy. We plan to launch a medical hotline for urgent professional counseling, establish the Israel Friends of IPA, and improve community ties to boost projects for PD patients and their close surrounding.

COVID-19 crisis highlighted the pressing need for renewing our technological infrastructures to deliver information, support and programming - remote and in-person. In the next 2 years, we will take steps to position IPA as a One-Stop-Shop for PD patients and their caregivers.

Your generous support will help us to maximize opportunities for PD patients to live well, and to advocate for the Parkinson’s community in Israel.

We hope you will join us again and support our endeavors.

With thanks and appreciation,

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