

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

March 3, 2022

Visit Our Website at:
www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/

This Month's Meeting

Nigel Harrison is in his Fellowship for Parkinson at John Hopkins Parkinson and Movement Disorder Center. He spoke about Parkinson Fatigue and Sleep Issues. It was a very good presentation. I believe he will be a great Movement Disorder Specialist. We had 17 people either on Zoom or phoned in. He did so well I received a couple of emails after we were done saying how good he was. That isn't something that happens very often.

Parkinson Technology

Driving with Parkinson's Disease

Driving is different today since the pandemic. People are driving faster and more recklessly than ever before. My mom and I have seen many people drive across the center line in the last few months. It has happened so much, that we have a standing joke about how she tests her reflexes on a regular basis. My mom has Parkinson's disease. Every time she goes to her movement disorder specialist, she is asked about her driving. The specialist has her demonstrate how fast she can push an imaginary brake pedal. My mom can push it very fast. The specialist also asks me how she is doing with her driving. The reason for this is that Parkinson can and will eventually affect someone to the point they will not be able to drive. What Parkinson's patients, doctors, and family members need to decide is the question of when should a patient stop driving.

Patients are not necessarily the best judge of when to stop driving. A big problem is that Parkinson's can affect their perceptions of what is really happening. For example, someone with Parkinson's disease thinks they are moving quickly. It seems like they are to them, but the reality is that they are moving very slowly. Now if that is translated to driving, a Parkinson's patient may drive very slowly. It feels fast to them, but unless they are watching their speedometer, they will not actually know the true speed they are driving. They may feel like they are pushing down quickly on the brake pedal, but they may be pushing it very slowly. Driving on the interstate at 40 mph or not pushing the brake quickly enough could cause a serious accident. On top of those issues, if a patient is suffering from cognitive problems, such as memory loss, they could get lost or not remember traffic laws. For this reason, patients should not be the only one who makes the decision whether they should keep driving or not. Other people need to be included in this choice.

Doctors are usually the one a patient's family turns to after they have suffered a frightening ride with an unsafe driver. The doctor will probably do some simple tests like the one the movement disorder specialist does for my mom. These tests though, have their limitations. The conditions that exist in the doctor's office are not the same conditions that exist on the highway where a fast decision may make the difference between safety or an accident. That is why my mom's doctor asks me about her driving. The specialist told me that family members are usually the best judges of a person's driving skills.

It is hard to be the family member helping someone to make the choice to stop driving. They want the Parkinson's patient to be able to be as independent as possible, but at the same time they want them to be safe. When a family member realizes that the safety of a patient is at risk from driving, they must make the choice to tell someone.

They should:

- Talk to the Parkinson's patient's doctor
- Talk to the Parkinson's patient themselves
- Possibly include a third party, such as a Driving Rehabilitation Specialist

The third-party involvement of an expert takes the pressure off family members and puts it on the shoulders of a neutral person. This may help keep the family members from emotional manipulation by the Parkinson's patient.

Driving Rehabilitation Specialists evaluate a person's driving to assess their ability to determine if they can improve a person's driving or if a person should stop driving completely.

I spoke to a company in Frederick, Maryland. They said that they will test visual, visual perception, cognitive, mobility, and behind the wheel abilities. In Maryland, the results of the test will be turned in to the MVA, which may pull the driver's license, depending on the results. The test will take 3 hours and the cost is \$516. Medicare does not cover it.

Rehabilitation of Frederick
1519 W. Patrick Street, A-2
Frederick, Maryland 21702
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I also located one at Hershey, but I do not have information on this one.

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Hershey Medical Center
30 Hope Dr. EC 130 P.O. Box 859
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717-531-7105

Holly McKee

This and That

The Covid positivity rates for Washington County is currently 3.76, which is wonderful. However, Franklin County in PA had 526 in the hospital on Tuesday, which makes them a very red state. Berkeley County in WV with 182 hospitalized, which is also very red. Those figures were for Tuesday, which is the last time I had time to check. So, I'm afraid we are going to have to wait for those figures to go down before we can have in-person meetings. Believe me, we can't wait to see everyone again. We have a good number of members from those two areas so we do have to figure how bad Covid is there. And I know Paul wants us back,

It seems it may be possible to have our picnic in June, I need to check with Maugansville Ruritan. For the new members, we usually have one the third Friday in June and again in September. We made the decision to start having them indoors since there were more ends of tables needed for wheelchairs than is available the way Pavilions are set up. Also, the weather isn't a concern then. Plus, the legs of the picnic tables stick out which makes them a danger for falling.

Again, I'm reminding you we need to update our records. **Please, if you have email send me your current address and phone number. We would also like to have the month and day of your birthdays. Email is jpfieri@verzon.net. After last month's newsletter, two new members replied which I already had. If I mail your newsletter. Please call me at 301.797.7323. We do screen our calls as we get a lot of spam calls. Please mention something about Parkinson or you are calling to update records and we will pick up. Thank you.** One couple on that list called.

Right now, we are experiencing having two of our leadership members who have their own problems to deal with. One is ill and the mother of the second one is ill and she have been so involved with that, as she should be. I'm only telling you this because it may take a little longer for us to get back to you. But we will!

Steve Silivous from Friends in Frederick is going to help us get a new website built and "try" to teach me how to maintain it. We thank you Steve for the generously of your time and knowledge.

April's speaker will be Johanna Ebbs, MS, CCC-SLP. She will be speaking about Loud Therapy and Swallowing, which a lot of Parkinson Patients have trouble with.

I believe that's all the news for this month. Here is your Zoom information for April below:

Hagerstown Parkinson Support Group is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Hagerstown Parkinson Support Group's Zoom Meeting

Time: Apr 7, 2022 11:45 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2046130838?pwd=eXREVGNtVWZGczc3VFhPN0pxVGY5QT09>

Meeting ID: 204 613 0838

Passcode: X7d1Lp

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Passcode: 414829

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2046130838?pwd=eXREVGNtVWZGczc3VFhPN0pxVGY5QT09>

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

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The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group
is supported in part by:



17567 York Road Hagerstown, MD
Stop by for lunch or dinner to support them!

Thanks to Paul Romsburg, his family, and staff of
the *Western Sizzlin* for supporting our group.

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