

Position Statement

Specialist Nurses (Parkinson's and Movement disorders) for people with Parkinson's

March 2020

Parkinson's Australia advocates for improved health care opportunities for Australians with Parkinson's disease to ensure patients receive the *right care in the right place at the right time*.

Unfortunately, people with Parkinson's are often unable to access health professionals who have a good understanding of their condition and best practice management.

The Australian Government announced at its Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook funding of \$5.8 million over four years from 2018-19 for a Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist Pilot to improve access to specialised nursing care in the community for people with Parkinson's disease, to be delivered by Primary Health Networks (PHNs) across Australia. This has subsequently been revised to provide funding of \$6.4 million for the pilot over five years (2019-20 to 2023-24).

Parkinson's Australia supports increasing access to health care providers that can provide specialist treatment for people with Parkinson and supports efforts to increase access to Parkinson's Nurses across Australia.

The principles of an Australian Government Movement Disorder (Parkinson's Nurse) programme should:

- Prioritise areas of need. Access to Parkinson's specific health services varies greatly across Australia and interventions by the Australian Government provide an opportunity to address unmet need and improve equity of access.
- Ensure that the design of the service is centred around the people with Parkinson's, and their holistic needs.
- Ensure flexibility to allow for the development and testing of innovative approaches in collaboration with other health professionals to establish multidisciplinary care teams for functional management of Parkinson's. Parkinson's Australia encourages a strong focus on rural health with the inclusion of testing telehealth and mobile health service delivery models in the Pilot.
- Implement a model of care that is cognisant of the broader operating environment in which the pilot is to be implemented. The pilot areas should be able to deliver an efficient and innovative model of health and medical services that improves the coordination of patient care.
- Be independently evaluated to provide information to the public on the merits of the pilots and models of Parkinson's Nursing that can be applied in the Australian context.

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Role of the Parkinson's Specialist Nurse

Through advanced clinical leadership, advice and support to patients and carers to promote effective condition and symptom management in the primary care setting, the Parkinson's Nurse will:

- improve health outcomes through **empowering** patients to maintain the best possible health and wellbeing in the community
- work with the patients GP and medical specialist(s) to support and coordinate **multidisciplinary care**
- assess, plan and implement an individualised **education** programme for patients to assist them to take appropriate action to manage their health
- **monitor** and document client response to prescribed treatment and liaise, consult and report back to relevant health professionals on client progress and/or significant changes which indicate a need for medical review
- monitor and **proactively manage** a patient's condition to minimise crisis events, accident and emergency presentations, avoid or minimise hospital stays, and delay and minimise the progress of disability through coordinating services and strengthening referral pathways
- assist with support for advanced therapies
- avoid residential aged care admissions