

## UC San Diego Health System Designated as Center of Excellence for Parkinson's Disease

February 26, 2015 | Jackie Carr

**T**he Movement Disorder Center at UC San Diego Health System has been designated the 41st Center of Excellence in the National Parkinson Foundation's (NPF) global network. This designation is the highest recognition offered by NPF to a Parkinson's specialty clinic. It represents the consensus of leaders in the field that the UC San Diego program is among the world's leading centers for Parkinson's research, outreach and care.

"It is an honor for the Movement Disorder Center to be recognized by the National Parkinson's Foundation. The program at UC San Diego Health System was intentionally modeled after the center of excellence vision because of its comprehensive patient-centered focus," said [Irene Litvan, MD](#), Tasch Endowed Professor in Parkinson's Disease Research and director of the Movement Disorders Center at UC San Diego Health System. "UC San Diego is recognized for diagnosing Parkinsonian disorders accurately, and early on, while providing personalized state-of-the-art care to each patient."

NPF Centers of Excellence are designated after a rigorous application and peer-review process. NPF has created a network of the leading academic medical centers that leverage the interplay between cutting-edge research and exemplary patient-focused clinical care.

"Dr. Litvan truly shares NPF's vision for the integrated research and care enterprise, where patient-focused clinicians deliver the latest care and newest therapies. Their clinic benefits from research into novel approaches that advance our knowledge and their research agenda reflects the priorities of patients and families," said Peter Schmidt, PhD, NPF's vice president of research and professional programs.

The Movement Disorder Center at UC San Diego Health System leads in research to understand the cause of Parkinson's disease, with strong programs in neuropathology and the use of stem cells to investigate gene-environment interactions that can lead to the disease. Clinical trials are underway to evaluate existing drugs that can slow disease progression as well as studies to identify biomarkers to enable early and accurate diagnosis of the disease. As part of an academic health system, the center is also focused on developing the next generation of scientists with



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strong and well-integrated training and fellowship programs.

Novel diagnostic options at the center include use of PET scan technology to measure and track abnormal protein deposits in the brain. New treatment options include administration of recently FDA-approved formulations of Levodopa to relieve Parkinson's symptoms. Options are also available for fast-tracking patients to clinical trials and surgery where appropriate.

The Movement Disorder Center identifies and treats other disorders related to Parkinson's disease, such as progressive supranuclear palsy, corticobasal degeneration, multiple system atrophy and dementia with Lewy bodies. It also manages tremors, dystonias, myoclonus and choreas. The center's multidisciplinary team is made up of neurologists, neuropsychologists, speech, physical and occupational therapists, a neurosurgeon, nurse practitioner, and a social worker, all specialized in movement disorders.

The NPF Center of Excellence network features world-renowned Parkinson's specialists focused on reaching across patient and professional communities to change the course of Parkinson's disease. The network serves more than 50,000 individuals diagnosed with Parkinson's. The Center of Excellence network is a proving ground for new therapies and care models through NPF's largest grants program and targeted initiatives, such as the Parkinson's Outcomes Project.

In order to participate in the competitive designation process, centers must first meet strict criteria for research, comprehensive care, patient outreach services and professional education. The NPF Center of Excellence network is widely credited with developing and promoting the modern Parkinson's team model of care and ensuring patients the highest standards of care.

NPF brings all Centers of Excellence together annually to provide updates on care activities and research initiatives. Each NPF Center of Excellence must re-certify every four years to ensure that they maintain high standards of care. This process includes a review of achievements as well as a team-based peer evaluation and an on-site assessment.

To make an appointment at the Movement Disorder Center at UC San Diego Health System call 858-657-8540.

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**Care at UC San Diego Health System**

[Movement Disorder Center](#)

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