

August 2025

## **Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Center Monthly News and Updates**

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Dancing with Parkinson's will be  
grooving at Shirley Ryan Ability  
Lab's Adaptive Fitness Center this  
summer!

# Dancing with Parkinson's

*Northwestern Medicine, in partnership with Joffrey Ballet, is happy to bring you Dancing with Parkinson's.*

**Date: Thursdays**

**July 24<sup>th</sup> and August 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Time: 12:00pm- 1:00pm PM (CT)**

**Location: Shirley Ryan Ability Lab**

**Adaptive Fitness Center**

**541 N. Fairbanks Ct., Mezzanine Level**

**Chicago, IL 60611**

**Cost: Free**

Join us for a wonderful bonding opportunity for People with Parkinson's & their Care Partners. Dancing with Parkinson's is a research- backed program that facilitates movement and increases physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Dances can be performed either standing or seated.



Register by scanning this code.

Questions? Email Katie at  
[movementdisorders@nm.org](mailto:movementdisorders@nm.org)

**Register here!**

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**Improv for PD is back this fall with  
another TEN WEEK session!**

# Improv for PD

*Northwestern Medicine, in partnership with The Second City, is happy to bring you Improv for PD.*

**Date: 10 week series on Thursdays**

**September 18 – November 20**

**Time: 2:00-3:30 PM (CT)**

**Location: The Second City**

**230 W. North Ave**

**Chicago, IL 60614**

**Cost: \$150 for all 10 sessions**

Join us for our improvisational group for persons with Parkinson's and their care partners. You don't have to be a professional performer or comedian to learn improv games and have fun!

In this class, you will learn improvisational theatre exercises that benefit emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. We hope that participants find their stress levels decreased and their laugh life increased!

Space for the group is limited. RVSP Required.  
Please contact Katie at [movementdisorders@nm.org](mailto:movementdisorders@nm.org), if you are interested in joining.

**Register Here**

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Registration is open for Music Therapy  
for PD's fall session, beginning  
September 2nd!



Department of Neurology

# Music Therapy for Parkinson's Disease



The Northwestern Medicine Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center is thrilled to bring you music therapy for Parkinson's disease.

If you have Parkinson's disease, you and another person can join us for music therapy. No musical experience is needed.

**Linda Jedrzejek is a board-certified neurologic music therapist who will lead participants through:**

- › Rhythmic warmups
- › Therapeutic instrument playing
- › Vocal exercises
- › Singing
- › Connecting with others who have Parkinson's disease

Join us for a relaxed atmosphere while improving and/or maintaining skills affected by Parkinson's disease.

## Program information

- Tuesdays, September 2 through November 18, 2025
- 1 to 2 pm
- Virtual via Zoom
- There is no cost to participate.
- Space is limited. Please email [movementdisorders@nm.org](mailto:movementdisorders@nm.org) if you would like to join.

**Register here**

**Join us for Parkinson's 101 at  
Central DuPage Hospital!**

# Parkinson's Disease 101

## Program Description:

- An Introduction to Parkinson's disease, including diagnosis, common motor and non-motor symptoms, treatment and interventions. After the presentation you will have the chance to ask your questions!

## Program Objectives:

- This is a program for people newly diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and their family members to learn more about Parkinson's disease.
- Learn about our team approach to Parkinson's disease and meet some members of the team.
- Participants will be able to meet others who are also newly diagnosed.

Registration is required.

Program will be a combined virtual/in person group

## Location:

Virtual and In-Person:  
CDH Inpatient Pavilion  
Conference room 1

## Registration:

Call: (630) 933-4234

Register online:

In-person: [Classes, Events and Support Groups Parkinson's 101 IN-PERSON CDH \(nm.org\)](#)

Virtual: [Classes, Events and Support Groups Parkinson's 101 Virtual Online Webinar \(nm.org\)](#)

## Dates and Time:

March 6  
September 11  
4-5:30 PM

## Questions:

Debi Crystal, LCSW  
[Debra.crystal@nm.org](mailto:Debra.crystal@nm.org)

25 North Winfield Road, Winfield, Illinois 60190  
[nm.org](http://nm.org)

## Parkinson's Players: Golf and Tennis is going strong!

# Parkinson's Players: Golf & Tennis

**Date: Weekly on Tuesdays**

**Beginning June 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Cardio Tennis: 4:00pm- 4:50pm**

**Instructional Golf: 5:00pm- 5:50pm**

**Location: Diversey Driving Range & Tennis Courts**

**141 W. Diversey PKWY**

**Cost: Free for Participants**

The Parkinson's Players Program is designed to promote play-based activities and foster friendship with those facing similar challenges.

**Tennis:** A fun filled session for players of all abilities. Cardio tennis emphasizes drills and tennis instruction. Bring your own racket or rackets will be available at the tennis center.

**Golf:** Whether an avid golfer or a novice, receive instruction on the fundamentals of golf, geared towards each player's skills level. Bring your own clubs or clubs will be available through the driving range.

Participants must be able to stand unassisted for 1 hour.

The program is at no cost for participants. Paid parking is available.

Space for the group is limited. RVSP Required.

Please contact Katie at [movementdisorders@nm.org](mailto:movementdisorders@nm.org), if you are  
interested in joining.

**Email to Register**

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**New virtual support group coming  
this fall!**



# Grief and Loss Support Group

Northwestern University offers support groups patients and families who are being treated for movement disorders.

**Grief and Loss Virtual Support Group**  
**Starting September 2025**  
**First Tuesday of every month at 1 PM, CST**

**For registration and meeting link please  
email:**

[movementdisorders@NM.org](mailto:movementdisorders@NM.org)

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**The PDMDC is growing! Please join  
us in welcoming these new  
members of our team.**

**Melissa Beno-Tokarz, LCSW,  
Social Worker at Palos Hospital**

Melissa Beno-Tokarz is a Licensed  
Clinical Social Worker serving the  
outpatient neurology team in Orland



Park, providing psychotherapy and social work support for those navigating complex neurological conditions. She is trained in several evidence-based therapy modalities, with experience across the lifespan and a strong focus on trauma-informed care. Melissa collaborates with providers to address emotional, behavioral, and practical challenges impacting patient well-being and quality of life. She is passionate about empowering patients and families through supportive counseling, advocacy, and resource connection.



### **Eilrayna Gelyana, MD, Movement Disorders Fellow**

Eilrayna was born in Tehran, Iran before moving to the United States and eventually settling in Buffalo Grove, IL. She completed her undergraduate degree in Neurobiology at Harvard before both medical school and Neurology residency at Johns Hopkins. She is interested in the pathophysiology of neurodegenerative diseases and patient-centered care in the absence of disease-modifying therapies, particularly in the context of atypical parkinsonism and Huntington's disease. Outside of medicine, she enjoys anything outdoors, board games, and culture and language preservation efforts in the Assyrian community.



### **Rebecca Jules, MD, Movement Disorders Fellow**

*Rebecca is originally from Haiti and later moved to Florida, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience and her Doctor of Medicine at the University of Florida. She completed her neurology residency at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is passionate about movement disorders and global neurology, with a particular focus on improving access to movement disorder care in*



*resource-limited settings. Outside of medicine, she enjoys traveling, playing volleyball, and attending comedy shows.*



### **Kellie Reynolds, OTD, OTR/L, CSRS, Parkinson's Program Coordinator at Palos Hospital**

Kellie Reynolds is the new Parkinson's Program Coordinator for the South Region. She is an occupational therapist and has spent the past three years at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, working primarily with individuals with neurological diagnoses in both the acute care setting and the multidisciplinary MD/ALS clinic. She's excited to help grow and expand Parkinson's-related programming and resources within the community, with the goal of promoting wellness and quality of life for both people with Parkinson's and their loved ones. Kellie currently lives in Chicago and enjoys going on walks with her puppy, going to concerts, and trying out new restaurants.

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**Shirley Ryan Ability Lab's Parkinson's  
Disease Interdisciplinary Bootcamp  
is now offered at Homewood,  
Glenview, and Burr Ridge!**

# Parkinson's Disease Interdisciplinary Boot Camp

Shirley Ryan  
**Abilitylab.**

Our Parkinson's Disease "Boot Camp" program at Burr Ridge, Glenview and Homewood DayRehab Centers is comprised of physical, occupational and speech therapy — customized to address individual needs and maximize abilities to greatly impact your patients' quality of life.

This comprehensive and intensive program will provide resources and help your patients develop strategies and routines that will set them up for success today and into the future.

## Services Provided

- Physiatry
- Physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy
- Social work
- Psychology
- Nursing
- Orthotics
- Equipment clinic
- Vocational rehabilitation

## What sets us apart

Our experts team with you to enhance your patient's abilities and well-being through integrated and innovative care. We will work together to create a customized program to address their needs that will include:

- Individualized evaluations
- An assessment of walking, balance, posture, voice, cognition, swallowing and activities of daily living
- Custom exercise plans that promote independence and work to slow the disease progression
- An environment and community for your patients to engage and interact with other patients with Parkinson's Disease
- A focus on interdisciplinary care to treat the whole person including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy
- Rolling Boot Camp admission

### **BURR RIDGE OUTPATIENT & DAYREHAB CENTER®**

630.388.6700

6070 County Line Road  
Burr Ridge, IL 60527

### **GLENVIEW PEDIATRIC & DAYREHAB CENTER®**

847.510.5620

2591 Compass Road, Suite 100  
Glenview, IL 60026

### **HOMEWOOD DAYREHAB CENTER®**

312.238.2160

19260 S. Halsted Street  
Homewood, IL 60430





# Parkinson's Disease Interdisciplinary Boot Camp



Our Parkinson's Disease "Boot Camp" program at Burr Ridge, Glenview and Homewood DayRehab Centers is comprised of physical, occupational and speech therapy — customized to address your individual needs and maximize your abilities.

This comprehensive and intensive program will provide resources and help you develop strategies and routines that will set you up for success today and into the future.

## Optimize movement and enhance quality of life

- Have you noticed a change in your mobility that is impacting your daily life?
- Is your family finding it harder to hear you due to a quiet voice?
- Are you finding it more challenging to multi-task?
- Are you looking for a more comprehensive approach to your Parkinson's Disease care?
- Do you want to find safe exercises that challenge you?
- Do you need advice on how to access resources near your home?

## What sets us apart

Our experts team with you to enhance your abilities and well-being through integrated and innovative care. We will work together to create a customized program to address your needs that will include:

- Individualized evaluations
- An assessment of walking, balance, posture, voice, cognition, swallowing and activities of daily living
- Custom exercise plans that promote independence and work to slow the disease progression
- An environment and community for you to engage and interact with other patients with Parkinson's Disease
- A focus on interdisciplinary care to treat the whole person



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## Shirley Ryan Ability Lab's Parkinson's Storytelling Program is returning this fall!



# Parkinson's Storytelling Program

## For People with Parkinson's and Caregivers

Living with Parkinson's disease or caring for someone who does comes with many challenges—but also powerful stories waiting to be shared. Our storytelling program is about connection, healing, and growth. Through guided workshops, we help participants find their voice, shape their stories, and share them in a supportive space. Whether you are living with Parkinson's or caring for someone who is, your story matters. Come share it with us.

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This is an 8-week program led by **Tekki Lomnicki**, Artistic Director and Founder of **Tellin' Tales Theatre**, and it includes:

- 6 virtual storytelling sessions
- 1 in-person or virtual dress rehearsal
- 1 in-person or virtual performance

#### Group 1: People with Parkinson's

- **Start Date & Time:** Tuesday, October 7, 2025 from 6:30pm-8:30pm
  - Weekly meetings on Tuesdays until November 11<sup>th</sup>
- **Performance Date:** Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025

#### Group 2: Caregivers

- **Start Date & Time:** Tuesday, January 13, 2026 from 6:30pm-8:30pm
  - Weekly meetings on Tuesdays until February 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Performance Date:** Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026

LET'S LIFT EACH  
OTHER UP—ONE TALE  
AT A TIME

Register by scanning the  
QR code



For questions, reach out to  
**Eric Espinoza**,  
[eespinoz02@sralab.org](mailto:eespinoz02@sralab.org)



Click here to read Shirley Ryan Ability  
Lab's Summer Program Summary

## Research Corner

New Stem Cell Based Research Study is  
coming soon to Northwestern!

**No Time to Waste**

exPDite-2 is a double-blind, simulated surgery-controlled phase 3 study evaluating the potential efficacy and safety of an investigational cell therapy called bemdaneprcel (bem-danepro-cell).

### About bemdaneprcel

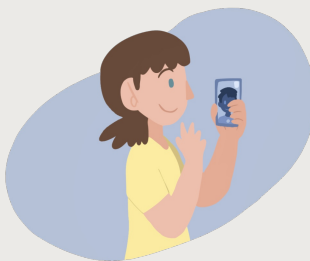
#### How is bemdaneprcel created?

BlueRock has developed a way to engineer dopaminergic neurons from stem cells. Bemdaneprcel contains the early form of these dopaminergic neurons, which are implanted in an area of the brain known as the putamen.

exPDite-2 will evaluate whether bemdaneprcel is effective in replacing lost dopaminergic neurons in people with Parkinson's disease to improve motor symptoms and quality of life. In the phase 1 study, bemdaneprcel was well-tolerated.

[Learn more about this upcoming study at this link.](#)

**Click here to learn more about ongoing research at Northwestern.**



## Virtual Support Group and Class Schedule

We use Zoom for all our support groups!  
Some classes meet in person.

Register for any of the groups and classes [here](#)!

General PD Support Group  
1st Wednesday of the month  
1:45pm- 3:00pm

Women and PD Support Group  
2nd Wednesday of the month  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

PD Care Partner Support Group  
Virtual: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

In-person: 4th Wednesday of the month, 1:00 pm- 2:30 pm

Therapy Tuesdays Exercise Class  
1st Tuesday of the month  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Chair Yoga for PD  
2nd, 3rd, 4th (and 5th)  
Wednesday of the month  
11:00am – 12:00pm

Art Therapy for PD  
3rd Monday of the month  
10:00 am – 11:00 am

Improv for PD  
Thursdays 2:00pm- 3:30pm

Young Onset PD Support Group  
4th Wednesday of the month  
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Grief and Loss Support Group  
1st Tuesday of the month  
1:00pm- 2:00pm

PD 101  
May 21st and November 19th  
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Dancing w/ Parkinson's  
Thursdays 12:00pm- 1:00pm  
July 24th and August 21st

September 18-November 20

PD 201  
July 16th and October 15th  
4:00 pm- 5:30 pm

Parkinson's Players Golf & Tennis  
Tuesdays beginning 6/10/25  
Tennis: 4:00pm-4:50pm  
Golf: 5:00pm- 5:50pm

Music Therapy for PD  
Tuesdays 1:00pm- 2:00pm  
September 2 - November 18

For a complete list of our groups and classes, including those offered at Central DuPage and Lake Forest Hospitals, click [HERE!](#)



## UPCOMING NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

### **PD HEALTH @ HOME** (National Virtual Programming)

Don't forget our weekly (M, W, F) virtual programming that focuses on Mindfulness, Wellness and Fitness! Our PD Health @ Home offers so much! To learn more visit this link: [Parkinson.org/PDHealth](https://www.parkinson.org/PDHealth)

### **Mindfulness Mondays- Awareness of Thoughts- August 4th**

We all think. Mindfulness won't stop that. What mindfulness can do is help us be aware of our thoughts so that we can put attention and energy into the thoughts that serve us, and let go of the thoughts that aren't helpful. In this session, we will discuss how this works and offer a guided meditation on awareness of thoughts.

Whether this is your first mindfulness Monday, or you are a returning participant, these sessions are created with the intention of including everyone. There will be time for questions following the practice. [Register Virtual](#)



## Parkinson's Basics: What You Need to Know- August 6th

This program offers an introduction and basic overview of Parkinson's disease (PD). PD varies from person to person and changes over time. Discover its causes, common symptoms, available treatments and effective strategies for managing them. Learn practical daily living tips to empower you to take charge of your health and to navigate the challenges of living with PD. [Register Virtual](#)

## Navigating Medicare & Disability Benefits with Parkinson's Disease- August 13th

Understanding Medicare and disability benefits can be challenging—especially when living with Parkinson's. This informative session will break down the essentials of Medicare, including what's covered (and what's not), how it supports people with Parkinson's, and how to navigate gaps in care. We'll also explore the intersection of disability benefits and Medicare, helping you or your loved one make informed decisions about available support and resources. Whether you're newly diagnosed, mid-journey, or supporting someone with Parkinson's, this session is designed to empower you with knowledge and clarity. [Register Virtual](#)

As a reminder, the Foundation has a variety of resources available to support you and the PD community, including:

[HELPLINE:](#) 1-800-4PD-INFO (473-4636)

or [helpline@parkinson.org](mailto:helpline@parkinson.org)

[PD Conversations](#) an online PD community, to connect with others living with PD and be part of a network of support.

[Newly Diagnosed Kit](#)

[Medical Alert Card](#)

[Fact sheet: Staying Safe in the Hospital with Parkinson's Disease](#)

[Tips for How to Prepare for a Telemedicine Appointment](#)

[Hospital Safety Guide](#)

[Podcasts](#)

PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND MOVEMENT DISORDERS CENTER

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