

## AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION DEVELOPS “GOLD STANDARD” PD TRAINING FOR FITNESS PROFESSIONALS

We all know exercise is important and has health benefits for people of all ages and abilities. But in the past several years, the importance of exercise and physical activity for people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) has exploded. Exercise produces many multi-system benefits including increased physical functioning (motor performance, strength, endurance), improved gait and balance, cardiovascular fitness, and overall better quality of life. As such, great strides are being made to make exercise a part of the standard treatment of PD.

To further this effort, in 2017, APDA convened a panel of PD and exercise experts that included neurologists, movement disorder specialists, and physical therapists, under the leadership of Terry Ellis, PT, PhD, NCS, Boston University and Lee Dibble, PT, PhD, ATC, University of Utah, to develop a gold standard of exercise recommendations for people with PD, and is proud to announce the launch of the online **APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals**. This one-of-a-kind program will train fitness professionals of all types so they may safely and effectively work with people with PD to develop exercise regimens that will support treatment of their symptoms and substantially improve their quality of life.

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*Exercise has been shown to improve Parkinson's symptoms as well as provide overall health benefits*

## APDA AWARDS MORE THAN \$1.7 MILLION IN RESEARCH GRANTS



*Dr. Aasef Shaikh, recipient of the prestigious George C. Cotzias Fellowship*

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is proud to announce more than \$1.7 million in funding to support cutting-edge Parkinson's disease (PD) research including: a prestigious George C. Cotzias Fellowship, two Post-Doctoral Fellowships, 11 Research Grants, and eight APDA Centers for Advanced Research. The grants are part of our 2018-2019 funding cycle.

In particular, APDA is pleased to award the three-year George C. Cotzias Fellowship to Aasef Shaikh, MBBS, PhD, Cleveland VA Medical Center and Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH — a young physician-scientist with exceptional promise. Dr. Shaikh examines how people with PD process information that they receive from their surroundings to help them maintain gait and balance. By understanding the multiple brain circuits that contribute to gait and balance, and how these differ in people with PD, the next generation of treatments can be designed to manipulate these circuits and prevent falls.

“It is vital to accelerate research and support translational ideas that can lead to new treatments for people living with PD,” commented David G. Standaert, MD, PhD, John N. Whitaker Professor, Chair of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Medicine and Chairman of APDA's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).

*Continues inside*



A message from  
President & CEO,  
Leslie A. Chambers

Dear Friends,

We're thrilled to bring you the latest issue of *APDA Insights* so that you can share in our excitement over all of the recent news.

Congratulations to our newest grantees, who with your support, will be investigating things like new biomarkers of Parkinson's disease (PD), gender differences in PD, the differences in PD among people of varying ethnicities and more. We're particularly excited to see what impact the prestigious George C. Cotzias Fellowship has on the promising work of Dr. Aasef Shaikh to improve treatments for Parkinson's.

We're also excited to tell you about two recently-opened APDA Centers for Advanced Research, as well as Dr. Rebecca Gilbert's new blog which is a great new way we're getting information and resources directly to you.

Your generosity and belief in the potential for better times ahead make all of this work possible. Thank you for all you do to help people with PD live life to the fullest.

Sincerely,

Leslie A. Chambers  
President & CEO  
American Parkinson Disease Association

"GOLD STANDARD" PD TRAINING  
Continued from cover

It is important for the fitness community to take into account a unique set of considerations to ensure that people with PD get the exercise they need in a manner that is specifically tailored to their particular symptoms and situations. With the growing number of community exercise classes specifically designed for the PD community, this online program is desperately needed to make sure that participants are safe and supported. The program will also teach fitness professionals about the signs and symptoms of PD and the important ways in which exercise can improve those symptoms, as well as how to describe common PD symptoms and clearly explain the benefits of exercise to those with PD.

APDA has once again partnered with the Office of Continuing Professional Education (OCPE) at Rutgers University in New Jersey to create this user-friendly program (APDA and Rutgers OCPE previously partnered on an online course for First Responders). The **APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals** is a 1-2 hour course with instructional videos and is now available on the APDA website. All of those who complete the training course will receive a certificate of completion. Visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/pd-fitness-training](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/pd-fitness-training)

We are proud to have assembled such a prestigious panel of experts to develop this important program and we're thankful for their contributions:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Terry Ellis, PT, PhD, NCS: Co-Chair<br>Boston University          | Jeff Hoder, PT, DPT, NCS<br>Duke University                   |
| Lee Dibble, PT, PhD, ATC: Co-Chair<br>The University of Utah      | Laurie A. King, PhD, PT<br>Oregon Health & Science University |
| Cristina Colon-Semenza, PT, MPT, NCS<br>University of Connecticut | Merrill Landers, PT, PhD<br>University of Nevada              |
| Tami DeAngelis, PT, DPT, GCS<br>Boston University                 | Marie Saint-Hilaire, MD<br>Boston University Medical Center   |
| Heather Cianci, PT, MS, GCS<br>Dan Aaron Parkinson's Rehab Center | Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA<br>University of Colorado  |
| Gammon Earhart, PT, PhD<br>Washington University St. Louis        | Lisa Shulman, MD<br>University of Maryland                    |
| Chris Hass, MS, PhD<br>University of Florida                      | Cathi Thomas, MS, RN<br>Boston University Medical Center      |

## APDA LAUNCHES NEW BLOG

APDA is excited to offer a new blog on our website featuring Dr. Rebecca Gilbert, APDA's Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer. Dr. Gilbert is talking straight to readers three times per month, breaking down the latest news and topics of interest to people living with PD.

With so much information available, it can be hard to sort through it all. The new blog, called "A Closer Look," will make sense of all the science in a way that's easy to understand, and include practical, take-home tips that can help PD patients and their care partners live life to the fullest.

Dr. Gilbert wants to hear from you! What's on your mind? Subscribe to the blog and suggest topics at [www.apdaparkinson.org/doctor-blogs/a-closer-look/](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/doctor-blogs/a-closer-look/).



Our focus is to identify researchers early in their careers and attract them to the PD field, as well as to help established investigators pursue new ideas. In many cases these projects produce significant pilot data, which helps researchers apply for and receive even larger research grants from the National Institutes of Health and other funding institutions.

“Our funding support this year will help investigate new biomarkers of PD, examine the scientific basis for gender differences in PD, and probe the differences in PD among people of varying ethnicities, among many other worthy projects that will have an impact on the future of PD research,” states Rebecca Gilbert, MD, PhD, Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer, APDA.

## APDA ANNOUNCES TWO NEW CENTERS FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH

APDA’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) recently approved grants for two new APDA Centers for Advanced Research: the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL, and The Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, MA. These Centers support large PD research programs that are at the forefront of investigation into the cause, treatment and ultimately cure for PD.

### Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL

Dennis Dickson, MD, will serve as the Director of the APDA Center for Advanced Research at the Mayo Clinic and is a world leader in brain pathologies of PD and other neurodegenerative diseases. “The new Mayo Clinic APDA Center for Advanced Research brings together the resources of the number one hospital in Florida as rated by *U.S. News & World Report*, and the nation’s largest grassroots network for fighting Parkinson’s disease,” says Dr. Dickson. “This joint effort will drive future discovery science and support therapeutic breakthroughs in basic and clinical Parkinson’s research.”

### Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, MA

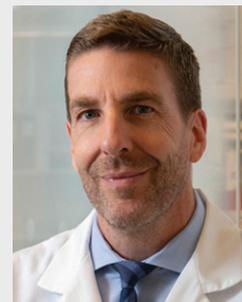
Dr. Clemens Scherzer will lead the efforts at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. His interdisciplinary lab includes bioinformatics engineers, geneticists, biologists, and clinicians.

He says, “Our Center brings together world-class scientists and physicians from across the Harvard community with a shared passion: to improve the lives of patients with PD. With our amazing patient community and the support of APDA, we are building a vibrant hub for ingenuity, research, clinical, and educational activities for Parkinson’s. We are weaving together patient genomics, large-scale computation, biology, and clinic to develop precision neurology for PD. It will be a Center for discoveries, breakthrough treatments, new investigators, and, if we succeed, a better future for all people with Parkinson’s.”



**Dr. Dennis Dickson, MD**

Professor of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Mayo Clinic, APDA SAB Member



**Dr. Clemens Scherzer, MD**

Associate Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, APDA SAB Member

## WASHINGTON APDA SUPPORTERS RAISE FUNDS TO FIGHT PD



The APDA Magic of Hope Auction & Gala in Seattle, WA, was truly a magical evening. Nearly 500 guests enjoyed a fabulous evening, while bidding on auction items and mingling with friends. Dinner was kicked off with a lively tribute to the honoree family, Chris, Jen and Lucy Adams by 75 of the Adams’ closest friends, who surprised them onstage by singing “*Sweet Caroline*” with the entire audience joining in. The bidding war was fierce during the live auction with items going for double and triple value, and a *Raise the Paddle* that amassed \$190,000! Guests came prepared to donate generously to the cause, and when the night was over a record-breaking \$505,000 was raised to help fight PD.

APDA President & CEO Leslie Chambers with Kirsten Richards, Jean Allenbach and Dwight Jones of the APDA Northwest Chapter at the Magic of Hope Auction & Gala.

# Ask the DOCTOR

Ask the

Q&A

with  
Dr. Rebecca Gilbert



**Q. I was recently diagnosed with PD and have a tremor in both my hands. Is it safe to try cannabidiol (CBD) to try to calm this down?**

**A.** Many patients are interested in whether medical marijuana can help their PD symptoms. You might find my recent blog about this topic to be helpful: [www.apdaparkinson.org/medical-marijuana-and-parkinsons-disease/](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/medical-marijuana-and-parkinsons-disease/)

The question of whether it is safe for you to try CBD depends on your other medical issues, your general state of health, and the other medications that you take, so have a conversation with your neurologist about whether you should try CBD. There have been only a few small clinical trials assessing whether medical marijuana can help tremor, with conflicting results. More studies are needed in order to determine the benefit on tremor.

**Q. Is there a test that a person can get to tell if they have PD? My spouse has had head tremors for years and has family members with head tremors, but also has family members with PD.**

**A.** Head tremors are usually not a sign of PD, but rather Essential tremor. Essential tremor can be found in multiple family members. I recommend a visit to a neurologist for a full neurologic exam to look for clinical signs of Essential tremor as well as PD. In both of these conditions, the diagnosis can be made based on clinical exam alone. However, if the neurologist is not sure about the diagnosis, a test called a DaTSCAN can be ordered, which is an imaging test of the brain which has been FDA approved to distinguish between PD and Essential tremor.

For more information, visit our website at [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org), or call (800) 223-2732. To make a donation online, visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/FallInsights2018](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/FallInsights2018).

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Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board, David G. Standaert, MD, PhD  
President & CEO, Leslie A. Chambers

American Parkinson Disease Association is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## What's happening at APDA



### Optimism Walks Update

It's been an exciting year for the APDA Optimism Walks, with the event season wrapping up at the end of October. Some of our biggest Walks of the year took place in June, with record-breaking events at our Northwest and Greater St. Louis Chapters! Every Optimism Walk is a special day of community, inspiration and fun. There are still a few great Walks left to join including CT, NV, MN and OK! As temperatures cool and leaves start to change, what better time to get out for a stroll? Gather your friends and family, or come on your own, and make this the year you take part in an APDA Optimism Walk! Visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks)

### "Spotlight On" Webinar Series

Did you miss any of our APDA "Spotlight On" webinars this year? Every webinar has been archived on our website so you can view them at any time. Check out informative presentations from PD experts about dyskinesia, DBS, exercise, "off" periods and more!

### APDA West Coast Parkinson's Educational Forum

For the second year in a row, APDA will host a free two-day experience for people with PD and their care partners featuring the latest in PD treatments and research news, movement and exercise demos, care partner programs and more. There's even an evening of dinner and dancing! The event is free, but registration is required. Visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/westcoastforum](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/westcoastforum)

### Caregivers Awareness Month in November

Parkinson's disease can impact more than just the person diagnosed with the disease. Family, friends and care partners are very much a part of the PD journey. Designated as "Caregivers Awareness Month", November is the perfect time to acknowledge those who make living with PD a little easier. Send a note, give a hug, or take a moment just to say "thank you" to the people who support you emotionally and physically. It's also a great time for care partners to remember that they need to take care of themselves as well.