

World Parkinson Coalition® and Vancouver's Parkinson's Community Collaborate to Make City "Parkinson Ready"

WPC teams up with Canadian Parkinson's organizations and AbbVie on legacy training program to reduce stigma and enhance support for Parkinson's community

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, August 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The World Parkinson Coalition (WPC), together with Parkinson Society British Columbia, PD Avengers and AbbVie, is proud to announce the launch of Make the City [Parkinson Ready](#) ("Parkinson Ready") program in Vancouver, Canada. The "Parkinson's Ready" program aims to reduce stigma and enhance support for individuals living with Parkinson's disease (PD) by training key leaders in the safety, transportation, and service industries in Vancouver. By improving awareness and understanding of PD, these leaders will be able to provide positive and supportive experiences for residents of Vancouver as well as visitors and families impacted by PD.

“ This training program not only educates and empowers Vancouver's front-line workers but also sends a powerful message of inclusion and support to the global Parkinson's community.”

Larry Gifford, co-founder of PD Avengers

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive neurodegenerative disorder, affecting more than 11.8 million people globally (1) and is expected to double by 2040. While Parkinson's is characterized by tremor, muscle rigidity, slowness of movement, and difficulty with balance, the symptoms are much broader than this with many hidden symptoms that impact quality of life, including depression, fatigue, pain, sleep challenges, and anxiety.

“Traveling comfortably and safely can be a significant challenge for people living with PD,” said Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard, Executive Director of World Parkinson Coalition. “PD is complicated and often misunderstood, so accessibility issues and lack of awareness by city staff can present a myriad of problems causing additional stressors for those living with the disease.”

The “Parkinson Ready” program will offer specialized 75-minute training and Q&A to front-of-house workers, security personnel, public service, and hospitality industry leaders and others. The program is designed to:

- Prepare Vancouver for the growing number of residents and tourists they will interact with each year living with Parkinson's.
- Ensure visitors to the city have a welcoming and safe experience while in Vancouver.
- Educate public services and hospitality industry leaders to better understand PD so they have more confidence in supporting people with Parkinson's.

"We are honoured to be a part of the Parkinson Ready initiative, which will play a critical role in increasing awareness and knowledge of the disease. The tools developed for this training hold potential for future use across the province, helping ensure that people with Parkinson's are treated with the dignity and understanding they deserve," shares Joanne Baker, CEO of Parkinson Society British Columbia."



"Marriott is committed to putting people first and fostering an environment that is inclusive and welcoming of all. We are thrilled to have the chance to kick off this incredible training on Parkinson's disease. We believe that embracing diversity including those with movement disorders, enriches our workplace, drives innovation, and reflects our core values of respect, integrity, and collaboration. It's how we connect people through the power of travel" said Graeme Benn, General Manager, JW Marriott and the DOUGLAS Hotel.

The WPC has a successful track record in making cities more accessible and inclusive through its "Parkinson Ready" legacy program, which has previously been implemented in Montreal (Canada), Portland (USA), Glasgow (Scotland), Kyoto (Japan), and Barcelona (Spain).

"We are thrilled to be part of this initiative," said Larry Gifford, co-founder of PD Avengers. "By thinking globally and acting locally, we can make significant strides in improving the lives of those living with Parkinson's. This training program not only educates and empowers Vancouver's front-line workers but also sends a powerful message of inclusion and support to the global Parkinson's community."□□

Once trained, the knowledge gained from the "Parkinson's Ready" program will enable leaders in Vancouver to support their communities, including approximately 17,500 people living with PD in

Vancouver and across B.C (BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2024). This training will benefit future visitors to the city, ensuring a welcoming and safe experience at the airport, hotels, meeting centers, public transportation, taxis, and beyond.

The impact of the "Parkinson Ready" program extends beyond the immediate benefits for individuals living with Parkinson's," says Juan Carlos Parra, Parkinson's Disease TA Lead and Senior Medical Director, Neuroscience, International Medical Affairs. "It creates an important ripple effect, fostering a culture of understanding and empathy within cities such as Vancouver. By supporting these initiatives locally, we can help build a legacy of understanding and support for years to come."

Parkinson Ready trainings will take place on November 25 and 26 in downtown Vancouver. Businesses and groups interested in participating in a training, or hosting a workplace training can contact Julie Winn, at Julie@worldpdcoalition.org.

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About the World Parkinson Coalition® and WPC 2026

The World Parkinson Coalition Inc provides the only inclusive international forum for learning about the latest scientific discoveries, medical practices, caregiver initiatives and advocacy work related to Parkinson's disease. The [7th World Parkinson Congress \(WPC 2026\)](#) will take place from May 24-27, 2026, in Phoenix, AZ, USA and is expected to attract more than 4,000 people.

About Parkinson Society British Columbia

Parkinson Society British Columbia's mission is to empower the Parkinson's community in British Columbia by providing resources and services to enable self-management, self-reliance, and self-advocacy. Established in 1969, the Society is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and supported by donations from individuals, members, corporations, foundations, and the dedicated efforts of volunteers. We believe every person touched by Parkinson's deserves to know that they are not alone in their journey. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff is committed to offering support, sharing reliable information, and raising funds for programs and research.

About PD Avengers

PD Avengers is a patient-led organization, united in the purpose of ending Parkinson's disease. We raise awareness, engagement and hope. We add urgency to the cause of ending Parkinson's disease. Think Globally, Act Locally.

About AbbVie in Parkinson's

At AbbVie, we are aiming to transform Parkinson's disease care and improve outcomes for those living with this progressive condition. We support individuals living with Parkinson's, addressing the physical, mental, and emotional impacts on their lives. With over 30 years of neuroscience experience, we collaborate to deliver products, education, and resources that preserve one's personhood. For more information about AbbVie in Parkinson's, visit

<https://www.abbvie.com/our-science/therapeutic-focus-areas/neuroscience.html>

1. [The Lancet Neurology, Volume 23, Issue 4 \(2024\)](#)

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