

# News Release

## For Immediate Release

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### **Lt. Governor Bauer declares April as Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month**

(Columbia, S.C.) Lt. Governor André Bauer joined members and staff of South Carolina's Parkinson's disease support groups to proclaim April as Parkinson's disease Awareness Month in the first floor lobby Tuesday morning.

"Spring is a time for new beginnings – I hope that April will be a time of growing awareness and support for those confronting the challenge of Parkinson's disease," Lt. Governor Bauer said. "Today, South Carolina joins the nation in declaring April Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month. I feel that it is vital to bring attention to the struggles of victims and their loved ones suffering from this debilitating disease."

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder that is caused by degeneration of nerve cells in the part of the brain called the substantia nigra, which controls movement. These nerve cells die or become impaired, losing the ability to produce an important chemical called dopamine.

Parkinson's affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans, and approximately 60,000 new patients are reported annually. There were nearly 18,000 Parkinson's disease-related deaths in the United States in 2003. Parkinson's disease is on the increase all over the world, and is now affecting younger people (as young as 30 years of age). Parkinson's is not just your grandparent's disease. There has been an alarming increase in the rate of diagnosis among young people.

The Columbia Parkinson's Support Group (CPSG) was established on March 20, 1985 to provide support, encouragement, information, contacts, and education for Parkinson's patients, caregivers, family members and others who are working in related fields or have an interest in Parkinson's disease.

This support group is located in the Midlands of South Carolina; serving the counties of (but not limited to) Aiken, Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Orangeburg, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, and Sumter. The group is operated and run by volunteers who are Parkinson patients themselves or are caregivers of Parkinson patients. When the group grew large enough to warrant a larger meeting space, Lexington Medical Center generously provided facilities in their LMC Auditorium.

In 2008, the Columbia Parkinson's Support Group became the first Parkinson's support group to be recognized by the Lieutenant Governor's Office "SC Access" program. The support group has also been recognized as a Lexington Medical Center Support Group.

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