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## **PARKINSON'S DISEASE - WHAT IT IS & WHAT IT IS NOT**

### **Parkinson's IS NOT:**

- Something "controlled by drugs"
- A "minor" medical problem
- Something that "just happens to the elderly"
- "Incurable" forever

### **Parkinson's IS:**

- A progressive, degenerative neurological disorder that slowly destroys human motor function by killing dopamine-generating cells in the brain.
- A disorder that, despite some available medication, leaves those affected with increasing stiffness, tremor and ability to move, and increasingly less ability to walk, talk, swallow, even move at all.
- A disorder that can kill, after years of suffering, when the basic functions of swallowing, digestion and breathing break down altogether.
- A disorder that strikes adults in their 20's, 30's and 40's, with 40% of those affected under 60, in the heart of productive, income-producing years.
- A disorder that devastates the lives of the million Americans who are afflicted – whatever their ages – and the millions more loved ones whose dreams are destroyed and lives thrown into chaos.
- An economic disaster for America - \$5.6 billion is lost annually in health costs, special care, lost productivity and lost tax revenue.
- A disorder that only shows up in symptoms after 80% of the dopamine cells are dead – so many millions more Americans may be at risk.
- A disorder for which breakthrough treatments and cure are predicted in the near future – if medical science is given the research funding it needs.