

## Help for Parkinson's Disease

**PATIENT TRIES AGAIN with Great Results**

Ten years ago, Larry Spence was stunned by what he learned from his primary care physician. "I left the doctor's office weepy eyed because I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease," Larry says.

Parkinson's disease (PD) is the second most common neurodegenerative disease in the United States, and Nebraska has the highest prevalence of PD per capita in the *world*. PD is a chronic and progressive motor disease that can cause difficulty with walking, balance, stability, muscle stiffness, voice quality, swallowing and eating, slowness of movement and the ability to participate or complete activities of daily living (ADL).

"I decided it was up to me, not doctors or medicine to help me," Larry says. "I took the medicine prescribed by my doctor, but I didn't exercise like I had promised myself that I would."

**FINDING SPECIALIZED HELP**

Three years ago, Larry's disease progressed, and he began looking for some help. He found that Columbus Community Hospital offered a comprehensive program specifically developed for PD patients, including:

- ◆ LSVT-BIG® – Physical therapy
- ◆ Parkinson's Wellness Recovery – PWR® – delivered by certified physical therapists focusing on early intervention and education
- ◆ Parkinson's exercise group
- ◆ LSVT-LOUD® for speech therapy
- ◆ SPEAK-OUT® used to improve the voice and swallow function
- ◆ CCH LOUD Crowd®, a weekly maintenance voice and exercise group for patients who have participated in the LSVT-LOUD or SPEAK-OUT
- ◆ Occupational therapy with a focus on ADL, such as the fine motor skills



- for dressing, bathing and grooming, reduction of hand tremor with adapted utensils for eating and writing (micrographia) and visual rehab
- ◆ Columbus Area Parkinson's Disease Support Group
- ◆ PD Resource Library

Larry took part in the LSVT-LOUD program to improve his voice and had excellent results that enhanced the quality of his speech. But he admits he didn't take it seriously and practice what he had learned, so the quality of his speech diminished. He also took part in the physical therapy program and had the same positive results, but again, Larry stopped doing the recommended exercises at home.

**BELIEVING, AND DOING!**

"One day I came to the exercise group in a wheelchair and Physical Therapist Matt Wesch pulled me aside and told me that if I came and worked with him, he would have me walking in two weeks," Larry notes. "I told him I didn't believe him, but I would try." One and a half weeks later, Larry was walking very well and decided to continue for eight more weeks.

Larry also started the speech therapy program again with Speech Pathologist Michell Ruskamp. "People come up to me and say they can understand me a lot better," says Larry. "My voice is still soft at times, but I am using a louder voice more often."

He has now joined the LOUD Crowd and the Parkinson's exercise group. And unlike the first time, Larry is also doing the exercises on his own. "The best part about the Parkinson's Wellness Program is the therapists I have: Matt Wesch, Michell Ruskamp and Haley Bidroski," Larry says. "My biggest thank you is to people in the community who fund the Parkinson's Wellness Program, including Pat Anderson, Phyllis Wragge and the Hospital Foundation." ◆

To learn more about the Hospital's comprehensive Parkinson's disease program, call 402-562-3333 or visit [www.columbushosp.org](http://www.columbushosp.org).