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Boston University School of Medicine

Office of Media Relations

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May 18, 1990

Dear Member of the Media:

Coping with an illness like Parkinson's disease not only requires knowledge of scientific advances, but also emotional strength, physical fitness and an ability to plan well for a future that may be less than independent. These are among the themes of the Boston University School of Medicine/Massachusetts Chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association's symposium, the only annual symposium in New England designed to support and educate Parkinson's patients and their families.

The symposium will take place on Wednesday, May 23, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the George Sherman Union at 775 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

Among the highlights will be a presentation on innovative treatments by Ira Shoulson, M.D., an author of the recent studies on the drug, deprenyl, the only drug shown to slow the progression of the disease in newly diagnosed patients. He will discuss deprenyl's usefulness for patients who have had the disease for some years. If the audience expresses interest, he will also discuss the controversies surrounding treatments such as fetal cell transplants and test-tube grown nerve cells, both touted as potential cures.

Harley Gordon, Esq., an attorney who specializes in protecting the assets of the elderly and handicapped, will advise his audience on how to plan for their financial future given the limitations imposed by their disease. For instance, he will present strategies for protecting their assets should nursing-home care become essential.

The role of physical fitness in the total well-being of the Parkinson's patient will be presented by Wayne Westcott, Ph.D, the National Fitness Director for the YMCA and author of a number of fitness books, including Strength Fitness.

Workshops for patients and family members on coping emotionally with Parkinson's will be presented by a psychologist and nurse who specialize in the psychological needs of Parkinson's patients. Other workshops, presented by the staff of the University Hospital's Parkinson's Day Program--a unique day-long education and evaluation program--will address the effects of nutrition and the careful monitoring of medication on Parkinson's symptoms.

Several Parkinson's patients will be available to speak with members of the media about their experiences with the disease and new treatments and their own strategies for coping with their illness.

For more information, please call Gina DiGravio or me at 638-8491.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Jacobs".

Patricia Jacobs, Manager of Media Relations
Boston University Medical Center