



New Mexico Parkinson's Disease Coalition History

The New Mexico Parkinson's Disease Coalition was formed in 2013. Its predecessor, the New Mexico Chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association suddenly lost funding from the American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA) in the fall of that year and by April, 2014 it ceased operating.

New Mexico has had some form of grassroots Parkinson's services since roughly 2000. It is unclear when the APDA began developing a network of 45 chapters and 56 Information and Referral (I&R) Centers across the country. But New Mexico was part of that effort.

These I&R centers were staffed by a neurologist who volunteered his/her services and were coordinated by a healthcare professional, often an RN. They were located in major medical centers, usually with a movement disorder program. The local chapter president was the third person in this team. In New Mexico, the 2013 I&R team consisted of Dr. Pirio Richardson as Medical Director, Colleen Frangos as I&R coordinator, and JoAnn Harner RN at the VA hospital as chapter president.

The financial arrangement for this team was a joint funding between APDA and the University of New Mexico. From the information available, it appears the APDA contributed 40% of the cost and UNM 60%. The actual annual amounts were estimated as \$24,000 from APDA and \$36,000 from UNM for a total of \$60,000. UNM's portion included overhead costs such as office space, phone, computer, copying, mailing, mileage, and other supportive services. The coordinator was a part time employee of UNM with benefits.

The chapter was required to hold an annual walk and forward 100% of the profits to national in addition to 50% of its fiscal year-end balance. It is unclear whether the chapter walks were initiated when the I&R Center opened or sooner. The financial success of the walks was modest with the exception of the last in 2013 which netted \$12,000-15,000, nearly triple previous years. Much of this success was credited to the efforts of Ms. Frangos.

The agreement between the national APDA and the NM chapter required that all remaining funds be given to the national at time of dissolution. In addition, national claimed ownership of the membership list which was disputed by the local chapter.

When the NM APDA board learned that the I&R Center had lost its financial support, it assessed the situation and determined it would not continue. Operations officially ended on April 30, 2014. Meanwhile, in November 2013 an NM APDA board member with legal expertise stepped up and asked others with Parkinson's to join in starting a new organization. They contributed enough to process articles of incorporation, bylaws, and filling for 501(c)(3) status which was granted in July, 2014.

Following are the individuals who became the incorporators of the Coalition. Most of these individuals became the Coalition's first board of directors: Joann Palmer, George Frear, Larry Kemp, Mildred Kemp (an incorporator, but not a board member), Aija Thacher, Pat Thalhammer, Don Thalhammer, Steve Yount, Karen Wingrove

Note: Some of this information was gathered from verbal conversations with NM APDA board members and its accuracy has not been confirmed.