SAMPLE OF PARKINSON'S NSW LETTER TO POLITICIANS

For Information Only

Dear <Name>,

Election Policy: Funding for regional Parkinson's Specialist Nurses

I am writing to seek your support for including funding for Parkinson's Specialist Nurses in regional and remote areas of New South Wales along with a 1800 Parkinson's InfoLine – a specialist virtual clinic providing statewide nurse-led advice, navigation and support – in your election policy for 2027.

Research by the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health of Charles Sturt University validates the effectiveness of nurses supporting Parkinson's patients at home and in clinics in rural and regional communities.

Costs to the NSW health system are driven by progression and severity of Parkinson's disease, coupled with the impact of dysfunction in motor and cognitive capacity. Experience shows that placing Parkinson's Specialist Nurses in regional areas of need result in significant savings in the NSW health budget while improving the quality of life of people living with Parkinson's.

The Problem

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurological condition in Australia and is also more common than many cancers – including breast, colorectal, stomach, liver and pancreatic cancer.

Compared with metropolitan areas, there is a higher prevalence of Parkinson's in rural and remote areas. Poorer health outcomes for residents of these regional centres are the result of difficulties in accessing specialist and primary health support.

The Solution

Research evidence points to the importance of early intervention and self-management strategies to reduce both the burden of disease and caregiver stress.

Parkinson's Specialist Nurses with the expertise and knowledge to support people with Parkinson's and their families can intervene early and facilitate self-management of the disease – in many cases avoiding prolonged hospitalisation and bed blocking which imposes a burden on the state's healthcare budget.

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Proof of concept is provided by four existing Parkinson's Specialist Nurse positions in the Southern NSW, Mid North Coast, and Northern NSW Local Health Districts. These roles are co-funded by Parkinson's NSW.

This model illustrates how care for people living with Parkinson's can be seamlessly delivered across a variety of settings – hospitals, homes and nursing homes – to minimise costs to the NSW health system and maximise health and wellbeing outcomes for Parkinson's patients.

Funding Required

Parkinson's NSW is seeking a three-year partnership with the NSW Government for a total investment of $4.6 million focused on two high-impact, system integrated services**:**

- The 1800 Parkinson's InfoLine – a specialist virtual clinic providing statewide nurse-led advice, navigation and support.
- The Parkinson's Specialist Nurse Network – a hybrid virtual and community-based service that supports people with Parkinson's, carers, GPs, specialists and Local Health Districts, with a focus on regional and rural NSW.

The proposal is for the NSW Government to invest approximately $1.53 million per annum for three years, for a total of $4.6 million.

Parkinson's NSW will more than match this amount from non-government sources, bringing total annual program investment to around $2.5 million.

From the NSW Government's perspective, the annual investment is fully offset if the combined InfoLine and Nurse Network prevent in the order of 70 fall-related hospitalisations per year (about 0.17% of older people's fall admissions) or avoid approximately 1,500 hospital bed days per year (around 0.26% of currently reported 'bed-block' days). Any additional reduction in falls or bed days represents a net saving for NSW Health and frees capacity for other patients.

I will be in contact shortly to set up a meeting with you to discuss this proposal in more detail.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Walker
Chief Executive Officer

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