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## THE AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION (APDA) GEARS UP FOR 2021 NATIONAL OPTIMISM WALK SERIES

*\* Kicking-Off Spring With Virtual Walks \* In-Person Walks in the Fall \**  
*Thousands Band Together Across the Country to Help People with Parkinson's Live Life to the Fullest*

**NEW YORK, NY, May 5, 2021** – The American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA) officially announces the start of the 2021 [APDA Optimism Walk](#) season, kicking off with **three virtual Walks on May 22, 2021**. Due to the success of the 2020 virtual Walks the Optimism Walks will remain virtual for the springtime events. The remainder of the Walk season is scheduled to take place in person throughout the fall, with full adherence to all public health guidelines and safety measures.

**What is an Optimism Walk?** The Optimism Walks are APDA's signature fundraising event series and a nationwide movement to mobilize and inspire people to step up and help put an end to Parkinson's disease (PD). Whether in-person or online, the Optimism Walks bring thousands of participants together to support APDA's mission to help every person impacted by PD live life to the fullest. With one million people living with PD in the United States and more being diagnosed every day, it is more important than ever to raise essential funds and awareness. Whether participating virtually or in-person, each and every participant is helping to make a difference for those living with the disease today and to push for answers that will ultimately make PD a thing of the past.

"This past year has been difficult in so many ways, especially for the Parkinson's disease community who were already dealing with the challenges of life with PD," states Leslie A. Chambers, President and CEO, APDA. "But there have been bright spots as well, one of those being our virtual Optimism Walks which enable us to come together in a safe way, and also expand to a much wider audience thanks to the virtual nature of the events."

### **Three fun ways to get involved:**

1. **Be a virtual walker:** Register today for one of the three virtual Optimism Walks taking place on May 22: the [Massachusetts Optimism Walk](#), the [Northwest Optimism Walk](#), and the [Virginia Optimism Walk](#). Participants do not need to live in or near one of these states to participate – anyone can join from anywhere!

**We watch...then walk.** Participants in all three Walks come together online for a fun and festive virtual Opening Ceremony & Celebration, and then everyone heads out to walk safely in their own neighborhoods. Participants will be encouraged walk on their own and share photos and



*First we watch.... Then we walk! Above, walkers from a 2020 virtual Optimism Walk participating in the online Opening Ceremony & Celebration, after which they headed out to walk safely in their own neighborhoods.*

comments using **#OptimismWalk** so together they can still be uplifted by a great sense of community and camaraderie. Everyone will *walk separately, but together* in solidarity for the PD community.

**2. Participate in-person:** 12 Optimism Walks will be taking place in person between August and October. “We miss seeing our PD community in person and we’re excited to reunite with them this fall,” states Chambers. “We take safety seriously, so we’ll be following all recommended guidelines and protocols. But even if the Walks look a little different, we know that the energy and enthusiasm of each Optimism Walk will be there!” Dates and online registration are being finalized now and will be posted as available at [www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks)



*Big smiles under those masks! A family in Connecticut heads out for a safe Optimism Walk in 2020*

**3. Donate to an Optimism Walk:** Those who cannot participate, and still get involved by making a donation to an Optimism Walk. Funds raised will help provide local programs and services in the area where each Walk is held, and also support nationwide programs and research. Donations to individual walkers, or to the Walk itself are most welcome. Donors can visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks) and select the Walk they want to support (and either search for a participant to donate to or make a general donation to the event.)

Chambers states, “access to the right information and support is key to living your best life, and that’s true for the person living with PD as well as care partners, friends and family. APDA is the largest grassroots network serving people with PD and their families. The more funds we raise at each Optimism Walk, the more people we can help every day.”

The funds raised help APDA provide much-needed support groups and exercise classes designed specifically for people with PD, which includes a wide array of virtual programming APDA has adapted and created to keep people supported, engaged and informed while they’ve needed to stay at home.

Corporate partners Amneal Pharmaceuticals, Lundbeck and Sunovion Pharmaceuticals have joined once again as National Sponsors of the full Optimism Walk 2021 event series. Representatives from these companies will participate in the virtual Optimism Walks and also be on hand at many of the in-person events to meet members of the PD community and demonstrate their special commitment to helping people with PD, families and care partners as they work tirelessly to bring innovative solutions to those living with this disease. Their generous support is critical to the success of our mission.

For a full list of events and dates, visit the [Optimism Walk section](#) of the APDA website, and see chart below.

Date	Walk	Location
May 22, 2021	Massachusetts	Virtual
May 22, 2021	Northwest	Virtual
May 22, 2021	Virginia	Virtual
August 28, 2021	Atlanta	Pernoshal Park, Dunwoody, GA
August 2021	Oklahoma	Venue to be determined
Fall 2021	Wisconsin	Venue to be determined
Sept 11, 2021	Midwest	Naperville Riverwalk Park, Naperville, IL
Sept 18, 2021	Rhode Island	Goddard State Park, Warwick, RI
Sept 18, 2021	Iowa	Principal Park, Des Moines, IA
Sept 18, 2021	Cape Cod	Barnstable High School, Hyannis, MA
Sept 25, 2021	Minnesota	Roseville Central Park, Roseville, MN
Sept/Oct, 2021	Long Island	Venue to be determined
Oct 2021	Connecticut	Sherwood Island Park, Westport, CT
Oct 9, 2021	Greater St. Louis	Logan University, Chesterfield, MO
Oct 30, 2021	South Florida	Burt Aaronson South County Regional Park, Boca Raton, FL

*\*Dates and venues subject to change.*

### **About the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)**

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is the largest grassroots network dedicated to fighting Parkinson's disease (PD) and works tirelessly to help the more than 1 million people in the US with PD live life to the fullest in the face of this chronic, neurological disorder. Founded in 1961, APDA has raised and invested more than \$207 million to provide outstanding patient services and educational programs, elevate public awareness about the disease, and support research designed to unlock the mysteries of PD and ultimately put an end to this disease. To join us in the fight against Parkinson's disease and to learn more about the support APDA provides nationally through our network of Chapters and Information & Referral (I&R) Centers, as well as our national Research Program and Centers for Advanced Research, please visit us at [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org)

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