

David Higgins, Ph.D.



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Michael J. Fox Foundation (formerly Parkinson's Action Network)

Public Policy Council

Patient Advocate, Parkinson's Disease

Appointed by Controller

Dr. Higgins earned his Ph.D. in molecular biology and genetics from the University of Rochester in New York, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Cancer Institute before moving to San Diego in 1990.

He has held positions at several biotech companies including Invitrogen, Chiron, Idun Pharmaceuticals and Oxford BioMedica. He has served as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Biology at SDSU and as an Instructor in the biotech technician-training program at SD City College. Dr. Higgins currently serves as the Parkinson's Patient Advocate member of the governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) informally known as the California Stem Cell Agency. He is Coordinator of the UCSD Parkinson's Disease Support Group Network

For Higgins, Parkinson's disease is a family legacy. His maternal grandmother suffered from PD - and she participated in the earliest levadopa clinical trials in the late 1960's. In early 2014 his mother died with Lewy Body Dementia. His maternal uncle and great uncle also suffered PD. In December 2011 - almost 10 years ago - Higgins was diagnosed with PD himself.

Soon thereafter In 2012, Higgins and a small group of people with Parkinson's started a self-run, no cost, open to everyone, peer support group. In 2016, after membership had grown from the original 6 or 7 to several 100, we joined forces with UCSD and became part of the UCSD Parkinson's and Movement Disorder Center. Now, in 2021, we serve more than 400 people, mostly in Central and Southern San Diego County.

Higgins has become an advocate for people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers/care partners. He uses his personal experiences to guide this advocacy work, focused on improving quality of life issues through education, support, training, networking and increased research funding leading ultimately to a cure.

He lives in the North Park neighborhood of San Diego with his husband and their 3 dogs.

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