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## **Parkinson's Advocates Receive Update on Advances - Representative Esty Presents Health Care Update**

On Saturday, March 12, 2016, members from four Parkinson's Support Groups gathered at the Southbury Library to listen to **Representative Elizabeth Esty** report on issues she and her Congressional colleagues are working on in support of finding a cure for Parkinson's Disease. Parkinson's Disease is a Chronic Neurological Disorder for which there is no known cause and no known cure.

The Program was hosted by the **Make a Difference Parkinson's Alliance**, which is a coalition of like minded independent Parkinson's Support Groups, each based in various areas of Connecticut, and who join together to produce programs where numbers of participant are required to attract speakers of prominence. The Groups represented serve over an estimated 400 People with Parkinson's (PWP) and meet in Southbury, Middletown, Torrington, Glastonbury, and Branford.

The two term Congresswoman from Connecticut's 5th District delivered a message of optimism regarding various initiatives in Committee. She began by congratulating the Connecticut Advocates for Parkinson's for their 10 Years of service to the Parkinson's community. She then shared her observation that there was a renewed spirit of bi-Partisanship in Washington that is allowing legislators to reach across the aisle and develop solutions to problems. She did note however that Science and Technology are progressing faster than the Government can keep up. She has targeted investment in research, and ensuring that treatment advances are accessible and affordable to all, as major priorities.

"She was very approachable and really seemed to want to help," said Larisa Gromyko, a Partner to a PWP from Milford, CT. "We found all of our Representatives to all be very warm and caring", shared Sarah Diaz, who serves as an Assistant State Director for the Parkinson Action Network and was part of a delegation that went to Washington DC. last week, speaking to representatives about increases in funding for research and regulatory agencies.

Participants at the meeting also appealed for Government to intercede in the area of accessibility to exercise and wellness. Studies show that PWP that are able to invest in better health practices are more likely to avoid early placement in care facilities .

MADPA hopes to have more "Advocacy Awareness" programs, and include other neurological diseases, such as MS Connecticut and Alzheimers, shared Steve DeWitte, Co-Chair of the Connecticut Advocates for Parkinson's and an adviser to the Michael J. Fox Foundation. The Connecticut Advocates for Parkinson's sponsored this MADPA Program. For more information about the Southbury CAP Chapter, or any of the other Support Groups, please call VickiAnn Manville @ (203) 262-6237