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The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research Works with Suvoda to Remove Reimbursement and Travel Obstacles for Clinical Study Participants

Parkinson's disease affects an estimated 1 million people in the United States and more than 6 million people worldwide. As the world's largest nonprofit funder of Parkinson's research, The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) is dedicated to accelerating a cure for Parkinson's disease and improving therapies for those living with the condition today. The Foundation pursues its goals through an aggressively funded and highly targeted research agenda, coupled with the active global engagement of scientists, Parkinson's patients, business leaders, clinical study participants, donors and volunteers.

While research around Parkinson's has made great strides, one challenge that remains is being able to identify biomarkers of the disease — an objective lab or imaging test that reveals the risk, presence or progression of Parkinson's. For instance, cholesterol, which helps doctors diagnose and monitor heart disease, is an example of a biomarker. In 2010, MJFF invested heavily in this area and launched the Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), a large-scale clinical study conducted at a network of clinical sites around the world focused on identifying and validating Parkinson's disease biomarkers. PPMI has emerged as a cornerstone in the field's growing understanding of Parkinson's pathology and as a model for following multiple cohorts of significant interest.

The study has enrolled more than 1,400 participants across the globe – from the U.S. to Greece to Australia – with some traveling across states and regions to participate at a clinical study site. Participants are asked to visit sites for at least five years, more frequently in the first years and then subsequent visits are made annually. To aid recruitment and retention, PPMI needs participants to be able to get to and from study sites easily and be reimbursed in a timely manner.

THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

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Vanessa Arnedo

Vice President of Research Cohorts The Michael J. Fox Foundation

The Solution: Addressing Participant Payment and Travel Barriers

In most cases, study participants must pay out of pocket for upfront costs and then be reimbursed. PPMI was previously using a traditional process of paying and reimbursing participants using paper checks, which were either sent to participants through the mail or picked up at a study site. As a result, volunteers often had to wait long periods of time to receive their reimbursements.

The study realized it needed a new way to ensure that participants were remaining engaged throughout the long protocol and that the experience was as seamless as possible for both the volunteers and the site coordinators.

"It's widely known that there are many barriers to participation in clinical research, especially in Parkinson's. To help find better treatments for this disease, it's important that financial reimbursements do not prohibit study volunteers from raising their hand to take part and move science forward," said Vanessa Arnedo, Vice President of Research Cohorts at The Michael J. Fox Foundation.

After assessing several solutions for participant payment and out-of-pocket reimbursements, PPMI implemented Greenphire Patient Payments, including the use of the patented ClinCard, to support patient-centricity as well as study site efficiency.

> "Since employing ClinCard in 2017, PPMI has seen **improved participant retention** and **diminished administrative burdens.**

Rapid Payments Increase Participant Retention

Since employing ClinCard in 2017, PPMI has seen success with getting participants paid quickly, as well as streamlining internal workflows and administrative work so that staff can focus more time on research.

More than 1,100 PPMI volunteers, across 33 site locations worldwide, have been issued and paid with the ClinCard reloadable debit cards, which a reautomatically loaded with stipend funds. Using ClinCards has increased satisfaction for both the sites and the volunteers. Study coordinators from PPMI really enjoy how quick and easy it is to accept submissions for reimbursement. Likewise, participants have appreciated how quickly they now receive their compensations and funds.

Suvoda is a global clinical trial technology company with a real-time experience platform that empowers sponsors and CROs to make confident decisions and sites and patients to take calm, controlled action. Suvoda delivers interconnected, action-driven software solutions and industry-leading services and support, so that even in the most time-sensitive, mission-critical moments, life-changing studies keep moving forward. Suvoda recently merged with Greenphire, a leading provider of clinical trial financial management and patient support tools. To learn more, visit suvoda.com and follow Suvoda on LinkedIn.