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**FROM CRAWLING TO WALKING TO DRIVING
DRAMATIC CHANGES FOR PARKINSON'S PATIENT
THANKS TO HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

Watching the clock and gauging the amount of time needed to function in public, Philip Serio of Montvale, took his medication, headed out the door, and hoped for the best. "I might have an hour before I would need to take more," said Mr. Serio. "Once the medication wore off, I couldn't move at all. I would freeze."

Philip Serio worked hard to maximize his ability to function daily. It became a losing battle as Parkinson's disease took over the lives of Philip Serio and his family. For 12 years, his loved ones painfully watched the life of this once vibrant man, who commuted everyday to work in New York City, progressively and horrifically diminish. He relied on seven different medications, six times a day to get through each day and yet it failed him.

"It was a real big effort for me to move. I couldn't stand up or keep my balance. I always had to hold onto something. I crawled. It was degrading. I couldn't do anything for myself," said Mr. Serio. His sleep diminished while the tremors, shaking and

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uncontrollable movements increased. The medications wore off quickly and side effects ramped up. Frequently, Philip's body would just stop moving altogether, at times dropping him to the floor, where he remained until help arrived. His children witnessed his debilitating nature and his inability to move, completely frozen stuck to the kitchen floor. Watching the progression of the disease is like watching a loved one die slowly.

That is until Philip Serio went to the Department of Neurosurgery at Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC) and with the help of Hooman Azmi, M.D., Anthony Marquinez, M.D., and Damon M. Fellman, M.D., changed his life completely. "Parkinson's patients depend on medications. Without them, they can't move," said Dr. Azmi, who specializes in the surgical treatment of movement disorders. "Responsiveness to medication may become unpredictable when someone has been on medication for a few years. Once Philip's medication stopped working for him, the disease became very disruptive for the Serio family. He was an ideal candidate for Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) - a pacemaker for the brain. The device delivers a therapy which is very much like medication, except that it's electricity. The therapy is delivered directly to the areas of the brain responsible for movement, helping the symptoms of conditions like Parkinson's disease."

DBS is done in two stages; the first surgical procedure takes about six hours. While the patient is awake, two small holes are made in the skull – one on each side of the head. Using an MRI and a CT, a target area is identified and electrodes are placed in

the brain. A week later, the electrodes are connected by wires to the pacemaker device, known as an impulse generator. After a two to four week recuperation period, the pacemaker is turned on and adjusted in the office setting. Electrical impulses are continuously sent from the device to the targeted areas improving movement disorders.

“Philip did really well. He has more control over his life now,” said Dr. Azmi. “There are many patients that can benefit from Deep Brain Stimulation.”

The procedure felt nothing short of miraculous to Philip Serio. “I was amazed. Once Dr. Azmi and Dr. Marquinez turned on the stimulators, everything improved. I was wheeled into the doctor’s office, unable to walk in, and I walked out – I experienced instantaneous results.”

For the first time in years, he was able to do things he used to take for granted. “I missed going fishing at the local pond, driving in my convertible with the top down, picking up the kids from school and stopping at Dairy Queen on my way home,” said Mr. Serio. “Driving is my life; I couldn’t do anything without the ability to drive. I felt like a 17-year-old kid again when I passed my driver’s test.”

Mr. Serio credits his family, Lynda, Leah and James, as well as the medical center’s surgical team, for getting him through a very difficult time in his life. “Without their caring, dedication and love I would not have been here today,” shared Mr. Serio. “The genuine concern for the patients cannot be surpassed by anyone. I recommend the surgery to everyone who is considering it. You can’t get anyone in the world to do it

better (than Hackensack University Medical Center).”

About Hackensack University Medical Center

Hackensack University Medical Center is a 775-bed teaching and research hospital and provides the largest number of admissions in New Jersey. The medical center was recently ranked in five specialties including **geriatric care, gynecology, heart and heart surgery, neurology and neurosurgery, and orthopedics** in *U.S. News's* 2008 publication of America's Best Hospitals. HUMC is the only New Jersey acute-care hospital to receive rankings in five specialties. For two years in a row, HealthGrades® named HUMC one of America's 50 Best Hospitals. This designation recognizes hospitals that have demonstrated superior clinical quality over a seven-year time period, based upon an analysis of more than 75 million Medicare patient records from 1999-2005. These hospitals have achieved better survival rates and lower complication rates across dozens of medical procedures and diagnoses, from cardiac care to orthopedic surgery, consistently ranking among the top five percent in the nation for overall clinical outcomes. HUMC is the only healthcare facility in New Jersey, New York, and New England to be named one of America's 50 Best Hospitals in 2007 and 2008. Only one percent of the nation's hospitals can make this claim. To learn more, please visit www.humc.com.

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PHOTO CAPTION:

Hooman Azmi, M.D., a neurosurgeon specializing in movement disorders at Hackensack University Medical Center, with Philip Serio during a follow-up visit.