

LAST YEAR, CANADA PAID ON AVERAGE
\$137 TOO MUCH



Fox vows to help all Parkinson's charities

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HEALTH REPORTER

Introducing his Parkinson's disease foundation into his native Canada yesterday, actor Michael J. Fox pledged that the research-based charity would help boost all groups working in the field.

Addressing fears his star power would draw funds away from the country's established Parkinson Society Canada, which focuses largely on support for people suffering from the neurological ailment, Fox said his group's move here would be a boon to all.



TONY BOCK/TORONTO STAR
Michael J. Fox introduced his Parkinson's disease foundation at the MaRS Centre in Toronto today.

"I really feel that a rising tide lifts all boats," the star told a news conference, called to unveil the Canadian arm of the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

"I think that in the 10 years we've been doing this (in the U.S.), we've raised Parkinson's awareness to the point where most organizations ... endeavouring to help the Parkinson's community are getting more attention now than they would have."

While praising the foundation's massive financing of research into the disease, society president Joyce Gordon expressed concern this week that Fox would siphon fundraising money away from her group.

Gordon has said she feared his popularity and the confusion two Parkinson's groups might cause among donors would hurt her organization, which spends 60 per cent of its \$10 million budget on support and education services.

But Fox defended his determination to work solely for a cure.

"Certainly we are grateful for the people who do that (support) work," he said. "But we knew that we needed to be focused. If we did nine things we would not do any of them well."

Fox, who was himself stricken with the ailment in 1991, urged donors to continue their support for the society. "The only thing we're in competition with is whatever is causing these (brain) cells to die," he said.

Fox's group has poured some \$150 million (U.S.) into stem cell research and cutting edge neuroscience since it was formed in 2000.

While funds raised here by the group will initially go to a pair of Toronto research labs, Fox said Canadian donations would likely be spread around the world.

"We don't focus on any particular institution, and particular country, and particular doctors. Everybody has a fair shot at what we have to offer."

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