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Contact: Bill Patjane

Phone: 800-651-8466

Email: [bpatjane@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:bpatjane@apdaparkinson.org)

## 2020 APDA Shawn Thornton Award for Excellence Winner Announced



Shawn Thornton, an NHL- former Boston Bruins Player and Executive with the NHL Florida Panthers, has done so much with the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) MA Chapter, that the Chapter named an award after him: the APDA/Shawn Thornton Award for Excellence, awarded to an individual who demonstrates outstanding service, dedication and care in support of those living with Parkinson's disease. In the last 10 years the Shawn Thornton Foundation has raised over \$1M for various charity including the APDA. In 2020, despite the pandemic and living & working in Florida, the Shawn Thornton Foundation successfully delivered the Putts and Punches for Parkinson's Golf event in October in MA (following social distance guidelines).

The 2020 APDA/Shawn Thornton Award for Excellence winner is Melissa Diggin, Nurse Practitioner, APDA Executive Committee Board Member and longtime APDA volunteer. Melissa grew up in Melrose, Massachusetts. She earned her undergraduate degree in Biology at Boston University. She then worked as a research assistant at Boston University School of Medicine in the Department of Neurology. She also assisted with the development and delivery of educational programs for the APDA. She then earned her master's degree in nursing at University of California San Francisco. She is a board certified gerontological nurse practitioner. After graduation she returned to Boston University Medical Center, Department of Neurology where she worked for almost 9 years in the Movement Disorders Clinic treating patients with Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease and tremor and coordinating clinical research trials. She has facilitated monthly support groups for patients with Parkinson's disease and atypical Parkinsonian syndromes since 2004 and has been a board member for the Mass Chapter of the APDA since 2006. Melissa has a long history of service and volunteering for the APDA. She currently works at North Shore Neurology & EMG, LLC, a general neurology practice in Beverly, MA where she continues to treat people with Parkinson's disease along with people with other neurological conditions.

About the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is the largest grassroots network dedicated to fighting Parkinson's disease (PD) and works tirelessly to assist the more than 1 million Americans with PD live life to the fullest in the face of this chronic, neurological disorder. Founded in 1961, APDA has raised and invested more than \$170 million to provide outstanding patient services and educational programs, elevate public awareness about the disease, and support research designed to unlock the mysteries of PD and ultimately put an end to this disease. To learn more about the APDA in Massachusetts, visit [apdaparkinson.org/ma](http://apdaparkinson.org/ma).