Michael J. Fox Foundation Selects Miller School for Distinguished Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research (MJFF) has selected the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine as one of eight international academic medical centers for the Class of 2026 Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders. The foundation’s award will support a two-year fellowship providing rigorous training and mentorship to a neurologist researcher specializing in movement disorders.

Ihtsham U. Haq, M.D.

“We are deeply honored to be one of just eight institutions worldwide chosen for this prestigious fellowship,” said Ihtsham U. Haq, M.D., professor and division chief of Movement Disorders in the Department of Neurology; and the Cornfeld-Hurowitz Endowed Chair in Movement Disorders. “This award is a tribute to the strength of our program, which includes leading-edge research and clinical care for patients with a wide range of neurological disorders in South Florida.”

Dr. Haq added that the first recipient of the 2026 Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders will be selected this fall and begin training in 2024. He added that the division
has educated more than 30 fellows since 1990 along with international visiting trainees and currently has two fellows this year.

Selected from a Highly Competitive Group of Applicants

An external review committee of movement disorder specialists, assembled by MJFF, selected the eight centers from a highly competitive group of applicants. Selection of awardees was based on several criteria, including their history of training successful movement disorder clinician-researchers; the breadth and depth of clinical care and research education; and training opportunities that equip fellows with the skills and knowledge to advance equitable access and diversity across clinical care services, research, education and community outreach.

Corneliu Luca, M.D., Ph.D

“This award acknowledges our dedication to supporting the education of future leaders in the field of movement disorders,” said Corneliu Luca, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of clinical neurology, co-director of the Movement Disorders Fellowship, and director of the Deep Brain Stimulation Program. “Collaborating with organizations like The Michael J. Fox Foundation allows us to work toward our shared objective of enhancing our understanding of Parkinson’s disease and improving the quality of life of individuals affected by it.”
Dr. Haq said the division’s clinical and research teams focus on addressing the barriers to care faced by Hispanics, Blacks and other members of South Florida’s diverse population.

“Our trainees have a unique opportunity to improve disparities in health care access and take a holistic approach to serving patients with movement disorders,” he said. “Another area of focus will be non-motor issues, such as cognitive impairment, which can significantly impact an individual’s quality of life.”

**Movement Disorder Specialists Are Key**

For people with Parkinson’s, seeing a movement disorder specialist is key to living the best possible life with the disease. Today, an estimated 6 million people worldwide live with Parkinson’s. Due to an aging population, the number of people diagnosed is expected to double by the year 2040. With the number of people impacted by Parkinson’s increasing, there is an urgent demand and growing need for more movement disorder specialists.

Since its launch in 2014, the Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders has trained 27 new movement disorder specialists and is on track to graduate 72 by the year 2028. The program has extended funding to 32 world-renowned academic institutions in nine countries and 12 U.S. states. To date, the Fellowship, now in its ninth year, continues to make significant contributions in enhancing access to high-quality patient care, leading scientific advances toward better understanding and treatment of movement disorders, and engaging their local or underrepresented communities.
Dr. Danielle S. Shpiner

UM’s Division of Movement Disorders The division holds Center of Excellence designations from the Parkinson’s Foundation, Huntington Disease Society of America, and the Tourette Association of America, and is an American Parkinson’s Disease Information and Referral Center. The division currently has more than 30 clinical trials enrolling patients with movement disorders.

“Our program has a long tradition of growing outstanding clinicians and researchers to become future leaders in the field,” said Danielle S. Shpiner, M.D., assistant professor of clinical neurology, co-director of the Movement Disorders Fellowship, director of the UM Parkinson’s Disease Interdisciplinary Clinic, and co-medical director of the UM Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence. “We are grateful to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for its support of our program, and we look forward to future opportunities for research and collaboration with the exceptional Edmond J. Safra Fellowship in Movement Disorders network.”