



CECILIA NASMITH Northumberland Today

Cobourg resident Lawrence Massey (left) has had good results with the deep-brain stimulation therapy in alleviating many of his Parkinson's Disease symptom. He met in Cobourg last week with Port Hope resident Andrew Haynes, who has just had the surgery and is also hoping for positive results.

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## New therapy looks promising for those with Parkinson's

CECILIA NASMITH  
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COBOURG / PORT HOPE — Andrew Haynes is hoping a specialized pacemaker type of device can make life with Parkinson's Disease more manageable.

The implantation of the device is done to effect a therapy called deep-brain stimulation, and it's not widely available, Haynes explained in a recent interview. The three-year-process of interviews and assessments to choose qualifying candidates eliminates perhaps 90% of those who apply.

"If I'd had any other health problems, diabetes or heart, or if I'd had depression or severe dementia, they would have eliminated me," he said.

The procedure, which has been available for about a decade, is not a cure-all. But in many cases, it does alleviate some of the more troublesome symptoms of the disease. Those who have had the procedure sometimes continue to experience some difficulties with things like speech, cognition, balance and infections. As well, they cannot have MRI procedures any more. But, on balance, most believe they come out ahead.

**“It's not perfect. There are still a couple of things — my voice is weaker, my balance is off sometimes so I'm clumsy around the house. But my meds are 'way down, about 60%.”**

*Lawrence Massey, on deep-brain stimulation*

medications, while remaining very symptomatic — the medication was wearing off too soon between doses and having unpredictable effects, he explained.

He was admitted to Toronto Western Hospital Feb. 16 for the eight-and-a-half-hour procedure, which is done while the patient is fully conscious. Because it is a teaching hospital, Haynes recalls the medical students and their various reactions as they watched.

Even though he still has one more procedure to come, the final hooking up of the implant, Parkinson's Society of Canada Northumberland-chapter facilitator Claire Lloyd is impressed with the improvement already.

"He looks wonderful today. His voice sounds stronger," Lloyd stated.

Haynes is encouraged by the progress of his friend, Cobourg resident Lawrence Massey, who had the procedure done almost a year and a half ago.

around the house. But my meds are 'way down, about 60%," Massey said.

"I would do it again, if I had the choice."

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In some cases, Haynes has heard, people who have the procedure can drop their medications by as much as 85%, which by itself could have untold positive effects in terms of reducing potential side effects.

The Port Hope resident was what is known as an early-onset Parkinson's case, diagnosed a dozen years ago at the age of 44. He was already at the maximum level of his

Massey shared his own recollections of the surgery — from the interviews, selection and preparations to the incision and implanting of electrodes — in his book *Shaken — Not Stirred: Living With Parkinson's Disease (My Perspective)*.

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*LAWRENCE MASSEY LIVED IN MORETON*

