

Activist Jesse Jackson Hospitalized with Rare Brain Disorder

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, the veteran liberal activist, one-time Democratic presidential contender and one of the last living links to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, has been hospitalized with a rare disorder.

Jackson, 84, is under observation in a Chicago hospital for progressive supranuclear palsy, Jackson's organization, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, announced Wednesday, according to WLS-TV.

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"He has been managing this neurodegenerative condition for more than a decade," the organization said in the statement, according to CNN.

"He was originally diagnosed with Parkinson's disease however, last April, his PSP condition was confirmed. The family appreciates all prayers at this time," the statement said.

Progressive supranuclear palsy is "a rare neurological disorder that affects body movements, walking and balance, and eye movements," according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

"PSP is caused by damage to nerve cells in areas of the brain

that control thinking and body movements...

"PSP is different from Parkinson's disease, although some of their symptoms are similar. PSP typically begins in a person's mid- to late-60s, later than when Parkinson's disease symptoms typically develop. The disease usually worsens rapidly and most people with PSP develop severe disability within three to five years of symptom onset."

The prognosis is not good.

"There is currently no treatment that effectively stops or slows the progression of PSP, and symptoms usually do not respond well to medications," according to the institute.

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As CNN noted, Jackson spoke openly about his 2017 diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.

"My family and I began to notice changes about three years ago," Jackson wrote in a statement at the time, adding that Parkinson's was the disease "that bested my father."

In 2021, Jackson was hospitalized with COVID-19 and underwent gallbladder surgery. He suffered a fall that year, striking his head and was briefly hospitalized afterward.

Jackson, who was a top aide to the Rev. Martin Luther King until King's 1968 assassination, sought the Democratic nomination for the White House in 1984, becoming the first black presidential candidate to draw national support, according to Newsweek.

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Last year, despite having limited ability to speak, Jackson

appeared in a wheelchair on the stage of the Democratic National Convention, according to The Washington Post.

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