

BREATHING *matters*

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Pulmonary Rehabilitation Works

SO WHY DON'T MORE PEOPLE PARTICIPATE? *With Robert Fishwick, RRT-NPS, C-NPT, COPD-E*

Pulmonary rehabilitation has a proven record of helping people with lung conditions breathe better and more comfortably. That's one of the things Robert "Rob" Fishwick, a respiratory therapist and supervisor at Elliot Health System in Manchester, loves about it.

"It's tangible," he said. "I watch people get better, even some who have had a disease their whole life. Their quality of life improves."

But there are many barriers to pulmonary rehabilitation or PR for short. Some people are directed to PR for the first time after being hospitalized for an exacerbation of their condition, but "at that point, they're feeling fine, so they don't want to come in," Fishwick said.

"Others are so sick, they say, 'I can't get off my couch—what do you mean I need to exercise three times a week?'" But even people on oxygen can participate, and do. Some are even able to come off supplemental O2 after a program of PR.

Not all primary care providers are aware of the benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation and don't refer patients. "We have people in their eighties who say they don't know why no one mentioned it to them sooner," Fishwick said.

What is pulmonary rehabilitation?

PR is a prescribed program of education, carefully monitored and safe exercise, nutrition, and support from professionals and peers to help those with chronic lung issues from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis) to pulmonary fibrosis and other diseases of the lungs to improve their breathing—and quality of life.

The goal is to help people manage their disease and be as active and healthy as they can, but that's just the beginning at Elliot. With all the enthusiasm of a high-school cheer team, Fishwick and crew make the pulmonary rehab department's gym sessions fun and entertaining.

Eight to sixteen patients at a time work on customized programs of 18 sessions over six weeks, each featuring a talk (energy conservation, medication management, nutrition, dealing with stress) and upper and lower body exercises (especially chest muscles), and a treadmill or bike



Rob Fishwick at Elliot Health System

workout. Programs are goal-oriented, with targets to reach. Patients are carefully supervised and every milestone celebrated, whether more minutes on the treadmill or climbing a set of stairs.

"It's all about empowering our patients and improving quality of life," Fishwick said. "We help you build a toolkit to manage lung disease. There is constant reinforcement." After pulmonary rehab comes maintenance with homework (exercises to do at home).

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Today respiratory therapists are seeing more nonsmokers with COPD as a result of secondhand exposure to smoke. Patients are getting younger too, in their lower fifties. Asthma (which affects one in nine Granite Staters) is a frequent complication, but that's just the beginning, according to Fishwick.

Benefits of pulmonary rehab

COPD patients have an average of nine co-morbidities, i.e., accompanying issues such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma, according to Fishwick. "It's challenging, but if you can get your COPD under control, this affects the rest of the conditions, since all body systems are related."

Feeling as if you can't breathe is extremely anxiety-provoking. PR teaches you techniques to improve your breathing, reducing the anxiety that goes along with chronic lung disease.

Pulmonary rehab reduces hospital admission rates for those living with COPD. This in turn reduces the burden on the healthcare system and cuts down on the costs of healthcare associated with COPD, Fishwick noted.

Increasing awareness about the benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation and making it more accessible to those who can benefit is an ongoing challenge, since messages are different for each target audience: the public, patients and caregivers, primary care physicians and pulmonologists, insurance companies and legislators.

Peer support is important because those with chronic illness tend to isolate themselves or be homebound. At Elliot, the "Air Ducks" not only cheer each other on, they go on outings together—including Breathe New Hampshire's annual Eager Breather's Fresh Air Day Cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee (on September 7 this year). "There is so much evidence that people with chronic lung disease can benefit from pulmonary rehabilitation," Rob Fishwick said. "I see the results every day."

Taking Action on COPD

Breathe New Hampshire's COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) Network continues to advance our efforts through a clinical, patient and public awareness approach to America's third leading cause of death. Our goals are:

- To continue to develop and provide the tools and resources for providers to properly diagnose and treat those living with COPD
- To increase and expand a coordinated awareness effort to those living with COPD, those at risk for the disease, and the general public
- Identify and promote opportunities for patients and family caregivers to connect with resources, support and others affected by the disease.

As we continue our NH COPD Plan work, it's critical that patients, families and the healthcare community have access to COPD programs, education and resources.

Breathe New Hampshire will offer educational and wellness workshops for patients and families, expand support groups around the state and provide a Continuing Medical Education (CME) program for primary care providers, respiratory therapists (RRT) and nurse care coordinators.

A year ago Breathe NH became involved with developing a national COPD Action Plan to provide a framework to coordinate efforts, increase awareness, and reduce the burden of COPD nationwide. The national plan will be released this spring. At that time Breathe NH will reconvene the NH COPD Network to review the recommendations in the national plan and determine how to integrate them into our ongoing efforts.

JOIN THE COPD NETWORK!

Are you a healthcare provider, patient or advocacy group? Make a difference by joining the Breathe NH COPD Network. Email COPD@breathenh.org.

UPDATE ON COPD PROGRAMS

Wellness Workshops Hit the Road

Our first workshop last November featured Dr. Donald Mahler giving an overview of COPD, followed by an expert panel speaking about energy conservation, medication compliance, and nutrition. To reach more patients, Breathe NH is taking this program on the road. In 2017 we'll partner with at least four healthcare facilities to offer regionally-based Wellness Workshops.

Go Team Orange!

Orange is the national color for COPD, and Team Orange kicks off during Pulmonary Rehab Week (March 12-18) and runs through May. A free program offered to hospitals, pulmonary groups and residential care facilities, Team Orange encourages those living with a lung condition to move more, so they can breathe and feel better. Participants log weekly minutes or miles on stationary bikes or treadmills and compete with other teams. It's a great way to connect, have fun and move! Last year almost 200 Team Orange members exercised a total of 386,527 minutes. Thank you to Exeter Hospital for sponsoring Team Orange T shirts again. Interested in Team Orange or a Wellness Workshop? Call 603-669-2411.

Breathe NH is pleased to report that COPD Program Manager Jane Goodman, who joined us last year, will continue her work thanks in part to a generous gift from The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation.

Night of Thanks

Celebrates Volunteers & 100th Anniversary

Breathe New Hampshire celebrated its centennial and its volunteers at the annual Night of Thanks on November 3 at Manchester Country Club.



Longtime volunteer and past Chair of the Board of Directors, Claira P. Monier of Goffstown received the Donald L. Frost Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.



Kate McNally of Marlow, program manager for the Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco-Free Communities, received the Robert B. Kerr Award for her professional commitment to furthering lung health. With her is Night of Thanks speaker Dr. Bartolome Celli. The Night of Thanks was sponsored by the Courville Communities, Devine Millimet, and Nathan Wechsler.



Welcome Our New Director!

Cindy Rybczyk has joined Breathe New Hampshire as our new Director of Philanthropy and Volunteers.

Before joining Breathe NH, Rybczyk worked for 15 years in fundraising and event management at other Granite State nonprofits, including the American Heart Association and the Alzheimer's Association.

She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Plymouth State University, and a Master's degree in Education from Central Connecticut State University. Rybczyk lives with her family in Londonderry.

A PROFILE IN GIFT PLANNING Committed to the Future of Breathe New Hampshire

Growing up in a family of smokers and losing both parents to tobacco-related issues, Lynn Friedel has a heart for Breathe NH's mission of eliminating lung disease. After retiring from a career in finance and looking to use her expertise to help others, Friedel became a volunteer.

"The future of the organization is important to me," Lynn said, "because the mission is so important. I lost my mother to COPD, and my father, a doctor of internal medicine, died at 45 of a heart attack. All four of my siblings smoked. We all did." Lynn quit smoking on Memorial Day 1973.

After two decades as Chief Financial Officer for Powerspan Corp., Lynn transferred her skills to Breathe NH six years ago as a member of the finance committee, then treasurer, and now as Board Chair.

But volunteering is only part of her commitment. Lynn has designated Breathe NH as a beneficiary of her 401K plan to provide for the future. "It was very easy to do," she said. She is now a member of the Dr. Robert B. Kerr Legacy Society. Thank you, Lynn!

Methods of gift planning which may offer tax benefits include giving via your will, life insurance policy, IRA or appreciated stock. Learn more by contacting Cindy Rybczyk at crybczyk@breathenh.org or 603-669-2411, or visit BreatheNH.org/giftplanning. As always, please remember to consult your attorney or financial advisor when making any changes to your plans.

The Dr. Robert B. Kerr Legacy Society is made up of members who have provided for Breathe NH in their wills, to help us continue our critical mission of eliminating lung disease. This society is named after our founder, Dr. Robert B. Kerr, who dedicated 50 years of his life to the organization.

JOIN US ON MAY 3, 11:30 AM AT THE BREATHE NH OFFICES FOR Lunch & Learn: Protect Your Assets and Leave a Legacy

A planned gift lasts long beyond a lifetime. It allows you to fulfill your dreams and wishes for our organization and demonstrate your commitment to future generations benefiting from our services while maintaining your current finances. Attorney Anu Mullikin will be available to answer your estate planning questions. Call Cindy at 603-669-2411.

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SAVE THESE DATES

- Thursday, March 23 | Legislative Breakfast
- Thursday, September 7 | Eager Breather's Fresh Air Day Cruise
- Monday, September 25 | Fairways for Airways Golf Classic
- Thursday, November 2 | Night of Thanks

BREATHE NH OPPORTUNITIES *To Take Action*

To take action or for more info on any of these issues, call Breathe New Hampshire at 603-669-2411 or email info@breathenh.org.



2017 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Breathe NH is tracking several legislative bills this session impacting lung health and air quality ranging from smoking (repealing parts of the NH Indoor Smoking Act, electronic cigarettes, smoking in vehicles with children under 16) to emission controls for vehicles, and radon.

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Join us for our annual breakfast for legislators to discuss important lung health issues facing New Hampshire residents, and Breathe New Hampshire's work to improve the lives of those living with lung disease. Free breathing test offered!

WHEN: Thursday, March 23, 2017, 8:00–9:30 AM

WHERE: State House Cafeteria, Concord, NH

MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT!

If you're interested in following legislative issues that impact lung health and engaging with elected officials, consider joining the Breathe Action Team. Email Kim at KCoronis@BreatheNH.org.

SHARE YOUR STORY!

Are you a person living with a lung condition in NH or do you have a loved one facing the challenges of living with asthma, COPD, lung cancer, or affected by breathing issues? Please share your story as we continue to advance state legislation, develop programs and services, and raise awareness.

BAG THE BUTTS!

The perfect activity for Earth Day, April 22! Cigarette butts are the world's greatest environmental litter problem. New Hampshire schools, community groups, and companies are encouraged to organize volunteers to spring into action and "Bag the Butts"—clean up cigarette butts and litter at parks, schools, and public spaces. Breathe NH will help coordinate activities and provide supplies.

In addition, Breathe NH offers a menu of tobacco prevention and lung health educational programs, resources and activities on topics from asthma to electronic cigarettes. We also have a Lending Library that includes 3-D models, displays and DVDs.