

Racing for Those Who Can't: Team Phenomenal Hope Runs for PH Awareness

APRIL 15, 2015 – On any given morning, you might catch members of Team PHEnominal Hope pedaling the peaks of Mount Washington or running across Hot Metal Bridge. The group – made up of professionals in Pittsburgh's medical and endurance communities – finds drive in a deeper purpose than the sheer endorphin rush.

On Sunday, May 3, athletes from the non-profit will compete in the Pittsburgh Marathon. Aside from a good time, the event serves as another platform for Team PHEnominal Hope to spread awareness about Pulmonary Hypertension (PH).

"This disease affects many people, yet has largely flown under the radar as far as awareness goes," said Patricia George, MD – Team PHEnominal Hope co-founder and a pulmonologist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). "Since Pittsburgh is one of the nation's largest PH treatment and research facilities, competing in the Marathon fosters a special sense of hometown pride."

Team PHEnominal Hope, a nonprofit founded in 2011 by two physicians who treat pulmonary hypertension, promotes the use of endurance sports to raise both awareness about PH and funds to help find a cure. The nonprofit supported its first Team PHEnominal Hope – a band of local female cyclists – in 2014 as they competed as a 4-woman team in the Race Across America. By partnering with the Pulmonary Hypertension Association, UPMC, Bayer Healthcare and numerous other sponsors, the team's efforts continue to expand beyond the small group of bike racers into a grassroots movement nationwide.

"As we prepare for the upcoming race locally, we realize people across the world living with PH are in their own race every day," Dr. George said. "It's a serious illness that becomes progressively worse, ultimately making it very difficult – if not impossible – for patients to breathe. When our team says we race for those who can't, we aren't being figurative. It's the very reason we are compelled to crawl out of bed at 5 a.m. and train no matter what."

In addition to the Pittsburgh Marathon, Team PH has something else to look forward to this May. World PH Day takes place May 5 – just two days following the race. On this day, organizations across the globe work in unison to spread word of the lesser-known disease that affects millions of people internationally.

"Needless to say, May is a big month for us. Through the Marathon, we will spread awareness for our cause right here in our hometown and even pass many of the PH patients UPMC serves along the way," Dr. George said. "Through World PH Day, we'll witness the far-reaching efforts from other organizations all over. With each and every event, we discover more support, motivation and hope for finding the cure we all seek."

About Team PHeNomenal Hope

Team PHeNomenal Hope was created with the knowledge that finding a cure for pulmonary hypertension begins with increasing awareness about the disease. They support using ultra-endurance sports as a platform to educate people about PH and the need for a cure. Through the Race of our Lives campaign, in partnership with the Pulmonary Hypertension Association, Team PH was able to raise more than \$130,000 for their cause. Throughout 2015, Team PHeNomenal Hope has racers participating in events across the globe each month. For more information, including a schedule of events, visit <http://www.teamphenomenalhope.org/>.