

Team PHeNomenal Hope Races to Spread the Word about Pulmonary Hypertension

MAY 5, 2015 – Dr. Patricia George knows all too well the debilitating effects of pulmonary hypertension (PH). A pulmonologist and pulmonary hypertension specialist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), she was attending a work event when an initial idea entered her mind for Team PHeNomenal Hope.

“I was sitting in the audience at the 2010 PHA International Conference,” George recalled. “The speakers – a team of healthcare providers – were recalling their climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro and I remember thinking how cool it was to inspire and communicate with people through one’s extreme sport.”

An avid cyclist who spent much of her downtime biking the hills of Pittsburgh, PA, George decided her hobby could provide more benefits than a mere endorphin rush.

“It just made sense to combine both loves,” she said.

Enter Team Phenomenal Hope.

The non-profit – made up of members of Pittsburgh’s medical and endurance communities – uses endurance and ultraendurance sporting events as a platform to spread awareness. Specifically, Team PHeNomenal Hope members compete in cycling, running and triathlon outings around the world to raise donations for research while educating the public on the greater cause.

In less than three years’ time, Team PH has partnered with major supporters like UPMC, Bayer Healthcare, and the Pulmonary Hypertension Association. With this help and recognition, the charity with humble beginnings is now a grassroots movement across the nation.

“Bayer is proud to support Team PHeNomenal Hope’s incredible efforts to raise funds and awareness to help the pulmonary hypertension community,” said Carol Satler, MD, PhD, Vice President, U.S. Medical Affairs, Cardiopulmonary and Hematology at Bayer. “What Team PH does for people with pulmonary hypertension is inspiring to all of us.”

Today, the disease affects millions of men and women of all ages worldwide. With an average life expectancy of three years after diagnosis, pulmonary hypertension research is at a crucial point in time.

“It is an often unrecognized and misdiagnosed disease, and with Dr. Patty George’s help on roads along with inside hospitals and research labs, we continue to work to care for PH patients and make scientific breakthroughs,” said R. K. Mallampalli, MD, Division Chief, Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. “UPMC is pleased to promote the pedaling, push and power of Dr. George, her Team PHeNomenal Hope teammates and, most important, their message about PH.”

With each sporting event and fundraising effort, the Team, according to George, grows more excited and determined to reach their ultimate goal.

“The PH community may be smaller in comparison to those of better-known diseases, but our supporters and the passion we share is strong,” George said. “With our steady forward motion, we will keep working to discover the cure at the end of the finish line.”