



# A Breath of Hopeful News

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Winter Issue

[www.abreathofhope.org](http://www.abreathofhope.org)

2016

## Women and Lung Cancer by Nancy Torrison

Lung cancer cases in women have been rising for decades, yet cases have fallen among men. More than 70,000 women will die of lung cancer in the U.S. this year, which is more than the number of lives lost to breast, ovarian and uterine cancers combined. Another startling statistic reveals that nearly twice as many women die of lung cancer as breast cancer.

The causes of lung cancer include smoking, exposure to radon in our homes, secondhand smoke, other environmental and occupational exposures, and a genetic predisposition. Recent studies suggest infection with the human papilloma virus (HPV) may also play a role.

Although smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer in women, never-smokers make up approximately 20% of lung cancer diagnoses each year. Nonsmoking women are twice as likely to get lung cancer as nonsmoking men. Also, a majority of lung cancer deaths in people exposed to second hand smoke are women.

While society tends to blame lung cancer patients for their illness, it should be noted that smoking is also a cause of other cancers and heart disease. The Journal of the National Cancer Institute reported that smokers had a 24% higher rate of breast cancers than nonsmokers.

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation's work focuses on each and every person who has been hurt by lung cancer. However, it also recognizes that lung cancer has become a significant public health issue for women. What we know is genetic mutations tied to non-small cell

lung cancer are more common among nonsmoking women than men. We also know that women with smoking histories are diagnosed more frequently and at younger ages than men.

### A Breath of Hope Research Fellowships

On December 31, 2015, A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation announced its 2016 \$150,000 Fellowships focused on the following subjects:

- 1) Women and Lung Cancer; and
- 2) Early Detection of Lung Cancer (**The Larry Benjamin Award**)

For the reasons listed previously, one of the 2016 A Breath of Hope Research Fellowships is focused on acknowledging and understanding gender-specific issues in lung cancer. Specifically, we seek understanding of growing lung cancer cases among American women.

With an ongoing commitment to early detection and an understanding that preventative screening is likely the quickest way to save lives and reduce an 83% U.S. lung cancer mortality rate, the second RFP seeks novel approaches to earlier detection of lung cancer.

The rest of the challenge for all of us who care about changing lung cancer outcomes in this country is to work through the stigma associated with lung cancer. The blame that society imparts on lung cancer patients prevents our society from talking honestly about the disease and further perpetuates the myths that keep it in the shadows where awareness cannot be achieved. At A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation, every life matters.

## Board of Directors

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## Research Program Update by A Breath of Hope Research Committee Member, Joseph Leach, MD

Dr. Joe Leach, Director of the Oncology Service Line for Allina Health and Principal Investigator of the Metro MN Community Oncology Research Consortium, brings to the ABOH Research Committee a wealth of experience in oncology and research. His special interest is lung cancer. He has received numerous awards, including Top Doctor two years in a row at the Mpls. St. Paul Magazine.

A Breath of Hope is happy to welcome Dr. Leach to our research committee, especially this year as we launch another round of research fellowships focused on *early detection* (The Larry Benjamin Award) and *women & lung cancer*.

**A message from Joe:** 2015 has seen incredible progress in the fight against lung cancer. It began in January when Medicare coverage for screening CT scans was enacted ensuring that the promise of lung cancer screening would become a reality.

The age of immunotherapy also officially arrived with the FDA approval of 2 drugs, Opdivo and Keytruda, for treatment of non-small cell lung cancer. Needed breakthroughs in targeted therapy also reached patients this year with the approval of Tagrisso for EGFR mutated lung cancer and Alecensa for ALK mutated lung cancer. Finally, another very

important win is that our Medicare carrier has agreed to cover broad molecular testing for lung cancer which will allow more patients to benefit from the promise of precision medicine. This will allow doctors to offer more extensive cancer gene testing to better understand the biology of each individual cancer and offer more effective tailored treatments.

While these are exciting developments for those touched by lung cancer, much more work needs to be done. A Breath of Hope will continue to lead the charge by supporting promising investigators working on the next breakthrough and providing the support and education

needed by those dealing with lung cancer now.



Dr. Joseph Leach  
A Breath of Hope  
Research Committee

## A Breath of Hope Ambassador Program—Welcome to our new staff—Maria Hurni!



**From Maria...** I'm thrilled to be joining A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation as the Ambassador and Community Outreach Coordinator. Fighting cancer and making sure patients and family members receive the support they need and deserve is a passion of mine for many reasons.

In January 2015, I was diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer. After chemo, surgery and radiation, I am now cancer-free. I was lucky to have wonderful, loving support every day of my journey, yet I know others have had very different experiences. I'm thankful to be able to use my own experience, gifts and education to help other people affected by cancer. I love A

Breath of Hope's mission and I'm excited to be part of it.

After attending under-grad at Concordia College, I returned to school and received two Masters Degrees—one in Christian Lay Ministry in 2003 and one in Public and Nonprofit Administration (MPNA) in 2014. Prior to working at A Breath of Hope, I worked in two faith communities creating new programs and outreach opportunities for all ages. During my MPNA studies, I interned at CAP Agency of Scott, Dakota and Carver Counties in marketing and development and also at the Governor's Office in Judicial and Commission Appointments.

My responsibilities at A *Breath of Hope Lung Foundation* will primarily revolve around managing the *Ambassador Program* and the *Men's & Women's Groups*. I will recruit and train volunteers to become ambassadors who will then be matched with patients that need rides to treatment or companionship during their cancer journey. I will work with hospitals to help them set up programs and **I may even call you** to find out if you are interested in giving back as a volunteer ambassador.

The *A Breath of Hope Men's and Women's Groups* are monthly meetings for those who have lost their spouse or significant other to cancer. Each meeting is facilitated by a licensed social worker and revolves around a topic that has been chosen by the members. I know from personal experience that cancer is devastating for families and to lose a loved one to lung cancer is a particularly painful experience. I look forward to meeting and learning from the brave and generous people that make up the A Breath of Hope family. I hope to meet more of you at upcoming events.

Carpe Diem! See you soon!



**Partner News**—Featuring Robert Winn, MD & University of Illinois at Chicago Cancer Center



ROBERT WINN, MD, is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Based Practice and Director of the University of Illinois Cancer Center at the University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System (UI Health). He is a Professor of Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Sleep and Allergy, Department of Medicine. His clinical duties are at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center where he runs the lung nodule clinic.

Dr. Winn’s research is focused on developing novel in-vitro and in-vivo models to study the more translational aspects in lung cancer. He has extensive experience in lung cancer research, both as a clinician and a research scientist with nearly twenty years of experience in treating patients and performing research in the field of lung cancer.

The work from his lab has resulted in a number of peer-reviewed journal publications, most notably on his work with a gene, Wnt7A. Wnt7A has been found to be a tumor suppressor in lung cancer and has been shown to reduce cell growth in non-small cell lung cancer cell lines and tumor growth in mouse models. Multiple NIH and VA Merit awards support Dr. Winn’s research. Although Dr. Winn has made great strides in his academic/research career, he spends endless hours running the Lung Nodule Clinic at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center. He hopes to improve the 17% survival rate of lung cancer by focusing on tobacco cessation and continuing to merge basic science research with the inequities he sees in high risk populations.

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation will partner with Dr. Winn and the University of Illinois Cancer Center on May 21st at the first **A Breath of Hope Chicago Lung Run/Walk**. Proceeds will benefit lung cancer research at UIC and ABOHLF!

**A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation Third Party Events**—Another way to fight cancer

Third Party Events benefit A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation by educating more people about lung cancer while raising funds for lung cancer research.

Thank you to A Breath of Hope Third Party Event hosts for going above and beyond to advance our mission!

**A Breath of Hope House**



**Party, 2/25** in Florida. Host: Mary Jane Benjamin

**Larry Benjamin Golf Classic, 6/20**

in Northfield. Hosts: Larry Benjamin Family

**Puttin’ on the Ritz Garage Sale, August** in Mpls. Hosts: Rita, Rosemary Hooper

**Bike For Hope MN, 8/6-7.** Hosts: Gary, Rosey Brausen

Interested in hosting a *Third Party Event* but don’t know where to start? We can help you entertain your friends, have fun, and use your crafting, cooking or athletic hobby to support the fight against lung cancer.

Give us a call with your idea: **952-456-2463.**

Together, we are stronger.



**4th Annual Women’s Wellness Tea**—Pearls of Wisdom for Healthy, Happy Lives



Register online [www.abreathofhope.org/events](http://www.abreathofhope.org/events)



Bags, Bling & Beauty Silent Auction including BCBG and other designer purses, beautiful jewelry, original art, a personal wardrobe consultation, \$1,000 private beauty party for eight of your closest friends and more!



Life-enhancing breakout sessions: Nutrition, Genetics, Staying Well During Loss & Activating Your Inner Champion



A scrumptious light lunch and delicious beverages + Spring Hat Contest



Laughter Yoga with Mary Anderson

**Gather your girlfriends, sisters & coworkers**

for a fun, classy & educational event that supports lung cancer!

**Event Venue:** Gale Mansion, 2115 Stevens Ave, Minneapolis

**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 5th, 2-4:30 p.m.

**Cost:** \$40/guest; \$250 table/7

Sponsored by:





**A Breath of Hope**  
**Lung Foundation**  
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**2016 Pledges to date...**

**Incandescent**

**Light:** Mary Jane Benjamin and the Larry Benjamin

Family, **Spot Light:** Don's Bald Eagles (Mills Family), Joan Maclin, Mary/Bill Zimmer, **Key Light:**

Curt Anderson **Reflection Light:** Myrna/Harry Camp, Sarah/Jim Diebel, Ed/Toni Egan, Mark/Janet Huss, Sally McCabe, Bonnie/Paul Mueller,

**Ambience Light:** Shanna/Justin Ballsrud, Peter/Katie Bucka, Myrnell/Tom Brusegaard, Ray/Veronica Byrne, Myrna/Harry Camp, Steve Dale, Lee Engelbrecht Family, Jeff/Lisa Flaig, Julie Opheim, Nancy/Jerry Torrison, Harvey Weiss



**amazon smile** ... is a simple way for you to fight lung cancer every time you shop, at no cost to you! When you shop at *smile.amazon.com*, you'll find the same low prices and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation. Please shop at smile.amazon!

**Important Dates: 2016 A Breath of Hope Events**

- **March 5:** Women's Wellness Tea: *Pearls of Wisdom*
- **May 21:** Chicago Lung Run/Walk with UIC Cancer Center
- **June 10:** A Breath of Hope Golf Classic
- **August 13:** Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk **10th Anniversary!**
- **September 24:** Duluth Lung Run/Walk

**Third Party Events benefiting ABOHLF:**

- **March 31:** David Yurman, Edina Store
- **June 20:** Larry Benjamin Golf Classic
- **August 6-7:** Bike for Hope Minnesota

**More information at:**  
[www.abreathofhope.org/events](http://www.abreathofhope.org/events)

Phone: 952-456-2463

Email: [info@abreathofhope.org](mailto:info@abreathofhope.org)



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*Every step is a breath of hope!*