



## A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation

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## News from the Field



Fig1 : 5mm lung cancer detected by CT scan

**Lung Cancer Screening Gets The Official Green Light** for those with specific risk factors—a great first step in preventing lung cancer for all Americans.

Late last year, in what has been the culmination of more than two decades of research and advocacy, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued its final recommendation approving CT screening for those at high risk for lung cancer. The recommendation sets the stage for both public and private insurance coverage and is expected to bring about a dramatic increase in lung cancer survival (up to 20% reduced risk).

The lung cancer community's hope is that CT scans will one day be as commonplace as

mammograms and colonoscopies, which have greatly improved survival rates in breast and colon cancers.

The USPSTF recommends screening for current and former smokers ages 55 to 74 with a smoking history of a pack a day for 30 years. The recommendation for screening includes those who have quit within the past 15 years.

We still have work to do to change lung cancer outcomes in this country, especially for nonsmokers, but this is a good start and the first sign of closing the gap between lung cancer and other cancers that have been better funded and more effectively prevented. We know that other cancers have seen greatly reduced mortality rates as a result of improved screening technology and increased accessibility to the tests. It's our turn, finally.

For more information about USPSTF recommendations, please visit: [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org).

Prevention of lung cancer starts with improved disease awareness that leads to preventative screening for all.

**Pass the word**—it could save a life!

## Doc Spot...by Mark Solfelt, MD, Thoracic Surgeon, ABOHLF Board Member

January marked an exciting new chapter for ABOHLF, when we announced a national RFP—Request for Proposals and began accepting applications for two A Breath of Hope Research Fellowships.

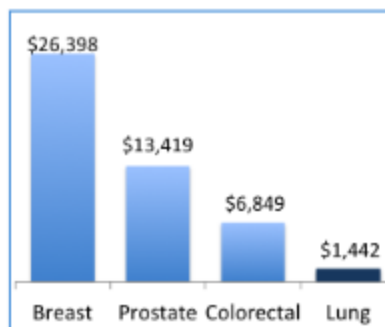
Starting this year, we are offering two year, \$150,000 scholarships to outstanding young researchers who are dedicating their careers to the fight against lung cancer. It has become increasingly difficult for young scientists to

become established and to compete successfully for funding, especially for projects related to lung cancer.

Our fellowship grants will provide a stable foundation for talented scientists working in America's universities/cancer centers and will allow recipients to build a career focused on curing lung cancer!

Note at right: Lung cancer claims more lives than any other cancer, yet it remains vastly underfunded.

Federal Government dollars spent on research per cancer death—2012



Lung cancer research in 2013 can be characterized by two main explorations: 1) Identification of new driver mutations in subsets of lung cancer; and 2) Progress in the development of effective immunotherapy.

Driver mutations are the genetic changes in cancer cells that provide a selective advantage to the cells. Some lung cancer mutations can be targeted with specific anti-cancer molecules to become the Achilles' heel of the cancer tumor. Identification of

specific mutations through routine testing enables the use of an effective and relatively non-toxic oral therapy in some cases. Other "actionable" genetic changes were also discovered for which oncologists will be able to prescribe new oral medications in the near future. Whole lung cancer genome sequencing is now in progress to characterize unique mutations in more than half of lung tumors. Personalized lung cancer medicine is here.

Additionally, redirecting one's immune system to remove the 'brake' placed by cancer cells on immune cells was another major success for lung cancer therapy in 2013. At present this therapy is only available for individuals participating in clinical trials, but there is hope that in 2015 we will have these novel immune therapies available in every oncology office.

*Dr Dudek is a full professor at the University of Illinois Cancer Center in Chicago.*



## Program News



In addition to the Research Fellowship Program, ABOHLF enters 2014 with new disease awareness and patient support programming.

**The White Ribbon Awareness Program (WRAP)** will be launched later this year, initially in low income communities in the Twin Cities where lung cancer is most prevalent. The

premise of the program is to eliminate silos to better educate society about lung cancer. In partnership with cancer centers, hospitals, schools and other wellness related nonprofits, ABOHLF will increase lung cancer awareness and access to screening, and better support patients and their families.

**The Ambassador Program**

provides volunteers to sit with patients during treatment, offer rides to the homeless and immobile, and speak incessantly about lung cancer in the community.

Call us if your civic group, faith community or work place is open to a speaker on the cause of our time, the deadliest cancer today: lung cancer.

## **Ambassador Story** by Gary Brausen, ABOHLF Board Member and Ambassador

As a survivor of stage III non-small cell lung cancer, I am very passionate about helping others afflicted with the disease. Recently, I was asked to help out a gentleman who had been diagnosed with lung cancer.

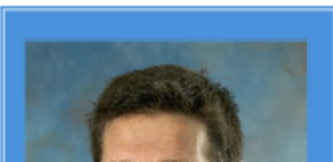
After his surgery, the doctors concluded that chemotherapy would be required which was an unexpected turn of events for him. I asked him if he had anyone to sit with him for his first chemotherapy session and he replied, "I do not". Remembering back when I was in the infusion room as a patient sitting with my wife, Rosey, we would see other patients without anyone sitting beside them. We had such compassion for them. Without hesitation, I jumped at the chance to sit with him.

Walking into the infusion room was surreal. I felt like I had come full circle. Here I was two years later, a caregiver in the same room I had sat in as a patient. Needless to say, this was a very emotional experience for me (yes, there were tears) as I realized how far I had come in my own healing. I finally had an opportunity to pay forward. I cannot describe in words how good it made me feel to make an impact in this man's life. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to help others and am thankful for A Breath of Hope's Ambassador Program, which will provide volunteer care companions for people who are struggling with this ugly disease alone.



## **Oncology Partner Spotlight—Minnesota Oncology**

**Minnesota Oncology:** Our mission is "to combine the strength of hope with the power of science, one patient at a time." We are a group of over 70 physicians and advanced practice providers who have come together with the sole purpose of caring for patients with cancer and blood disorders. We have ten clinics throughout the metropolitan area of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and staff seven satellite clinics throughout greater Minnesota. That's a lot of clinics and a lot of doctors! This is very intentional – our clinic and staffing model is to provide care quickly and close to home. We are committed to providing a comprehensive, patient-centered approach to cancer care.





When a patient faces a diagnosis of cancer and treatment that may involve chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, the stress of the unknown impacts their quality of life as much as, or more than the disease itself. Patients appreciate the timely, thorough individualized treatment and follow-up plans that the physicians and staff at Minnesota Oncology provide.

We are excited about the progress we are making in lung cancer. Through our collaboration with US Oncology, a national network of cancer care specialists, we will soon be launching another clinical trial for patients with relapsed lung cancer. This trial incorporates a promising new drug called PDL-1 antibody. This treatment is meant to re-set a patient's own immune system, and has shown great promise in early-phase drug development studies.

**Research is paying off!** That certainly provides a breath of hope for everyone.



**MINNESOTA ONCOLOGY**

Update by Dr. Paul Thurmes  
Minnesota Oncology  
Edina Office

## A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation Remembers by Steve Dale

Sally Dale was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in September 2010. Over the next 26 months, there were 65 pages of tributes created on her CaringBridge site. Two words are constantly repeated - love and smile. Her family dearly misses her love, but everyone misses her smile - even people who

didn't know her, like the gentleman at Perkins who felt compelled to tell her how special her smile was, in spite of the patch covering the eye that the cancer had recently invaded. Sally's smile was warm, welcoming, bright and cheery and she used it to face each day. The message she requested to be

shared at her memorial service was, "Put a smile on your face every day and you can get through anything, because smiles spread!" Sally lived these words to the fullest and refused to let cancer take her love of life away. This was her final gift to all who loved her.

### SMILE ON SALLY!



## Event News—Please Join Us!!



### Women's Wellness Tea March 1 at The Marsh

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

**Saturday, March 1** marks *A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation's* second annual Women's Wellness Tea focused on reducing stress and improving overall wellness to prevent and heal from serious health issues. We hope you will join us! Notable event details:

#### Mind, Body and Balance Speakers:

- 1) Nancy Hutchison, MD, brings words of wisdom about every day, stress-free activities that can help us both prevent and heal from serious health challenges, such as cancer.
- 2) Molly Ellefson, MS, CHWC, speaking on motivation and stress, brings good news about ways in which we can boost our happiness factor each day.

**B & B Silent Auction:** Featuring handbags, costume and fine jewelry!

**Thank you sponsors:** Minnesota Oncology and Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, part of Allina Health

**News alert! The 8th annual Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk has moved to Lake Harriet—August 16th!**



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Call 952-456-2463 for information about joining.

*All information in this newsletter is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. Questions? Email [nancy@abreathofhope.org](mailto:nancy@abreathofhope.org)*

## Important Dates:

- ◆ **Saturday, March 1:** *Women's Wellness Tea* from 2-4pm at The Marsh in Minnetonka
- ◆ **Friday, June 13:** *A Breath of Hope Golf Classic* from Noon to 7pm at Deer Run Golf Course in Victoria (Registration opens 4/15)
- ◆ **Saturday, August 16:** *8th Annual Twin Cities Lung Run/Walk* from 9am to Noon at **Lake Harriet Band Shell** (Registration opens 6/1)

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

**Building critical mass will bring attention to lung cancer—join us!**