

## A Reflection on the Journey to *Racing Toward A Cure: The PHA's 2014 International PH Conference and Scientific Sessions*

The Pulmonary Hypertension Association's conference is like no other. It is truly a one-of-a-kind meeting that brings the scientific community together with the patients and their families in the common goal of sharing information to help those afflicted with PH. This meeting is a living embodiment of the mission of the 4 founding women—Dorothy Olson, Teresa Knazik, Pat Patson, and Judy Simpson—who together set out to eradicate the loneliness of PH by establishing a PH-focused organization that would create a network of support for patients and families, encourage research, and build contacts with PH-treating physicians. Hence, in 1990 the first issue of *Pathlight* was published under the organization of United Patient's Association for Pulmonary Hypertension (UPAPH). This was followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> International PH Conference in 1994, held in

Stone Mountain, Georgia where the first research room was created by Dr. Greg Elliott. His unique idea was the source of the blood collections which later contributed to the discovery of the genetic mutations associated with PAH. In 1997, the organization officially changed its name to Pulmonary Hypertension Association and, 1 year later, the *Patient's Survival Guide* was published.

The dedicated forces of the like-minded patients and volunteers working toward the common goal of increasing awareness and a cure put in motion a trajectory of rapid expansion. This driving mission resulted in the largest conference to date in 2014 with more than 1500 global attendees. The living legacy of the founding women can be felt within the active interchange of dialogues and questions of the Medically-led Sessions, at the breakfast tables where patients can address questions to physicians and other patients, and in hallways where you see groups of people engaged in sharing experiences, asking questions, and empowering the community with information to best fight this disease.

The bi-annual conference also hosts a day of state-of-the-art scientific presentations from around the world to share current research. It is my sincere pleasure to present this issue which focuses on the chosen topics to highlight the latest progresses in translational research in pulmonary hypertension. I am sincerely grateful to our guest editor, Anna Hemnes, MD, for inviting key presenters to share the findings on novel pathways and signaling systems, as well as controversies and advances in treating the pediatric population with PH. I am also pleased to present the issue's feature of PH Grand Rounds of a unique case, roundtable discussions reflecting the achievements of the meeting, and Ask the Expert column contemplating the role of PH support groups. The ongoing work and accomplishments of the PH community are a tribute to the founding women.

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## GUEST EDITOR'S MEMO

In this issue of *Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension* we focus on the Scientific Sessions that occurred in June 2014 at PHA's 2014 International PH Conference. The focus of the Scientific Sessions was "New Treatments and Targets in Pulmonary Hypertension." While this issue highlights several of the informative and exciting talks that were given at the Scientific Sessions, some of the many tremendous advances were the growing attendance at the Conference overall: more than 1500 people registered; inspirational interaction with patients, families and caregivers continued; and cutting edge science was presented at the poster session the night prior to the Scientific Sessions. The unique research room was busy again this year enrolling patients in what serves

as a tremendous resource to scientists now and in the years to come. The day of the sessions also included thought-provoking debate on the future of clinical trials in PAH with important input from representatives of the National Institutes of Health.

Our goal was to highlight potentially transformative science in all forms of pulmonary hypertension and in all patient populations. To that end, talks focused on pediatric pulmonary hypertension as well as new treatment targets in Group 2 pulmonary hypertension and new potential therapies in pulmonary arterial hypertension. The best abstracts submitted by young investigators were also presented and are included in this issue.

This issue is a wonderful synopsis of

the highlights of the Scientific Sessions, but the energy and enthusiasm to find a cure for pulmonary hypertension are inadequately sensed on these pages. As always, PHA's International Conference and Scientific Sessions fed our appetite for more research and better care for patients with pulmonary hypertension. I think it is safe to say we all left feeling eager to get back to work!

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