

# A Breath of Fresh Air

A newsletter for Reliant Medical Group COPD patients and their families

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## ***Lots of news... and life changes***

These are supposed to be the hazy, lazy days of summer, but here at the COPD Disease Management program, quite a lot is actually happening. This, of course, means change and I know that change is not easy – even when it's for the better. There is no doubt in my mind that the changes are going to make the program better.

Some of you have probably heard already that Kelly Wilder has decided to leave us and become a hospice nurse. Kelly has not been with us for very long but the nurse who will replace her, Tenneal Perron, has been with us for nine years and I believe will stay for a long time. You will hear from her directly later in this issue.

The other news is that, after 18 years in this program, I'll be retiring. My last day here will be September 16<sup>th</sup>. For some of you, who have been with me for many years, it will be difficult to accept a new nurse but I can assure you that we have found my perfect replacement. Her name is Denise Martin and she is a very experienced, knowledgeable and compassionate nurse. Her plan is to stay with the program for many years. She will introduce herself to you in the next newsletter. Her phone number will be the same as mine so you can just keep contacting her the same way you have been contacting me. I can also share with you that the decision to retire has not been an easy one for me, since I truly love my job. Thanks to all of you, it has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I learned a lot from you, not the least of which is coping with the daily challenges of COPD. I have learned to be thankful for what I have instead of complaining and feeling sorry for myself for what I don't. The optimism and love of life you have demonstrated has been a true inspiration. But, all good things must come to an end. I am, though, looking forward to the next phase of my life being as fulfilling as my life has been so far. One of the many things I hope to do is teach 5<sup>th</sup> graders about the dangers of smoking and convince them not to start which, as all of you know only too well, is a lot easier than quitting later.



I also have some good news for you that will save you money on your ProAir rescue inhaler. You can get it for \$16 with two refills at the Saint Vincent Hospital pharmacy. If you choose to take advantage of this great price all you have to do is call Tenneal or me and we'll send a prescription to the pharmacy. The most convenient way for you to get the ProAir at this price is to pick it up when you are at the hospital anyway.

➤ And here is **Charles Scioscia's** update on his healthy lifestyle makeover:

"The last time I wrote, it was about a challenge I had given myself, which was to lose enough weight to be able to fit comfortably into a New England Patriots championship jacket, that a friend had left behind. It took some work on my part and words of encouragement from Margalit and a few friends, but I accomplished this challenge."

At the time the summer season was getting closer and I wanted to be able to wear some nice summer clothes I had purchased. But along came May 25<sup>th</sup> (my birthday) and May 30<sup>th</sup> (Memorial Day) and between those days I had gained back about 15 pounds and could not fit into my new summer clothes. So once again I set a challenge, watching what I ate, reading labels, making sure I ate only what I should, and exercising each day. My exercise was in the form of walking between 5,000 and 7,000 steps a day. I have set a walking goal of 10,000 steps a day by Labor Day. I'm feeling good and happy to say I can fit back into my summer clothes. I was even able to enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> of July without going overboard.

Watching what you eat and getting plenty of exercise will help keep you looking good, and make you feel good about yourself. A few things helped me stay the course. I send a daily email to Margalit with my daily intake and daily steps and receive feedback from her. I have learned to eat less and still be satisfied and have tried new healthy foods that are really delicious. I go to the monthly meetings with Margalit and other people with COPD who struggle with the same problems I do. All the exchanging of ideas, getting the latest information, venting, and just the camaraderie that has developed over time, are all very helpful. Having succeeded at convincing my neighbors to join me on walks outside on beautiful days and also indoors in stores and the mall when the weather is too cold or too hot, has been very rewarding as well. Being able to breathe better, being more active and looking better make it all worthwhile.



*Wishing you all the very best!  
You will always have a very special place in my heart!  
- Margalit*

## Tenneal Perron, LPN, our new care manager – in her own words:

*Although I am new to the role of COPD Care Manager, I am not new to the pulmonary department at Reliant. Many of you I may have already met over the past nine years, whether in passing or possibly providing care or education to you in our treatment room. I look forward to meeting each one of you and partnering with you in successfully managing your health. Previously, I served as the Clinical Supervisor of the department. In this position, I have gained valuable insights into the workings of the various insurance requirements and policies, which has enabled me to help so many patients – from obtaining specialty medications to equipment. I also have experience working with patients with sleep apnea which is a condition many of you have in addition to COPD.*



*I have thoroughly enjoyed my years here in Pulmonary, and am quite enthused to continue my time here as a member of our COPD Disease Management program. I am truly excited and passionate about being a part of our innovative COPD program, which provides support and care to patients with continuity, personalization, and compassion. Every day, I feel fortunate to call myself a nurse and to make a difference in someone's life. Nursing to me is not just a job, but part of who I am.*

*On a personal note, my husband and I have three daughters age 28, 19, and 14 as well as three adorable grandbabies. We enjoy spending much of our free time with them as well as our two dogs.*



### Here's how to reach us

#### **By phone:**

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#### **Our "old fashioned" address:**

**WMC Suite 390, 123 Summer Street, Worcester, MA 01608**

#### **Online you can check us out at:**

**[www.reliantmedicalgroup.org/copd](http://www.reliantmedicalgroup.org/copd)**





## Your contributions!

There were many fun and rewarding parts to my work here and writing and editing this newsletter for the last 13 years has been right up there. I received a lot of good feedback from many of you and realized that the most popular part of the newsletter was your contributions. So, since this is the last issue I am writing, I have decided to go back and look through all those contributions you have submitted over the years and choose some of my favorites to share with you again. I am not using your full name this time just in case you don't want your name to appear for whatever reason. It was not easy to make the selections but here they are:

➤ **KB** wrote about his experience at the pulmonary rehab program with Judy Gray. KB says he didn't only get to exercise under supervision and learn about COPD but he also became friends with other people in the group who support each other and exchange important information and useful tips. The program lasts for eight weeks, meeting three times a week. If any of you are interested in joining, just call us. If you qualify, we'll refer you.

➤ As you have noticed over the years, I never get tired of urging you to exercise and stay as active as possible. Unfortunately, you never run out of excuses why you cannot be active. So, here is **IA's** advice on how to get your daily exercise rain or shine. IA recommends the **pedal exerciser**, also known as the aerobic exerciser. She has been using it faithfully three times a day and has found that her legs are feeling much better. You can get it for \$19.95 at [www.globalindustrial.com](http://www.globalindustrial.com). IA says that even though it is inexpensive, it's good quality. You can put it on a table or desk and use it for your arms as well.



➤ **LN** has a great idea for those of you with brittle skin, usually the result of Prednisone. LN recommends **Posey Skin Sleeves**. These sleeves create a latex-free barrier that helps protect fragile skin. They cover the leg or arm while leaving the thumb and fingers free. They come in light and dark tones so they blend with your own skin color.

One good place to order them for \$10.95 is [www.healthyskin.com](http://www.healthyskin.com).

