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November, 2012

Annual Report and Request for Your Support

We send our best wishes for the holiday season. We hope your year has been happy and healthy. It's the time of year we try to update you on the goings on at PERF, the Pulmonary Education and Research Foundation.

The Rehabilitation Clinical Trials Center is busier than ever. A number of interesting and challenging projects have come through our doors. COPD patients have a hard time doing what they want to do both because their lungs are damaged and because their muscles are weak. We're working on both problems. A novel device that assists breathing, but only weighs one pound, promises to make the work of the respiratory muscles easier and decrease shortness of breath. In a study that defined the mechanism of benefit of this device, we showed that exercise tolerance was improved dramatically. We have two projects that seek to relieve the strain on the right side of the heart due to dysfunction of the blood vessels in the lungs of COPD patients. We're about to start a project that will build muscles (and hopefully increase strength) with a high-technology drug. And there is more: we're testing several new bronchodilators that, in the next few years, have high potential to replace the drugs we're using today. Finally, a project funded by PERF is well under way that seeks to find a more efficient way of doing rehabilitative exercise training in COPD patients.

We've had important news about one of our long-term projects, COPD Gene. This study seeks to determine the genetic causes of COPD: why some smokers get COPD while others do not. The study started in 2008 and recruited 10,500 smokers across the USA, 760 at our research center. A wealth of information has been obtained; dozens of papers have already been published. The new development is that the National Institutes of Health, which funded the original study, has agreed to fund a project extension to allow all subjects to have a return visit five years after their initial visit. We'll then be able to determine the genetic causes of *progression* of COPD – a crucial issue. This project will keep us busy for the next few years.

But I really haven't gotten to the *real* news: two events in the Rehabilitation Clinical Trials Center that constitute the biggest changes in many years. First, 2012 is the year Harry Rossiter arrived. Harry is a PhD scientist with an amazing record of productivity in the fields of exercise physiology and muscle biology. The key tool in his recruitment was the Faculty Recruitment Fund established by our good friend, Alvin Grancell. Harry has already proven his worth, introducing sophisticated methods to our study of muscle function in COPD. We're really fortunate to have Harry join the fight to improve the lives of COPD patients. We're also grateful that he has accepted appointment to the PERF Board of Directors.

The second event is also game changing. We've moved into our new home, the Chronic Disease Clinical Research Center. The building dedication was held on October 24; it was attended by about 200 people, including several members of the PERF Board of Directors – including Mary Burns and Brian Tiep. I gave a short talk in which I was sure to acknowledge the Grancell-Burns Chair in the Rehabilitative Sciences as a key contributor to our group's success. You may remember that this 24,000 square foot, two story building was

funded by a \$10 million grant from NIH and will house three research groups, including ours. It is a real beauty, the webcam that recorded its construction is still in operation; visit

http://cdcrccam.labiomed.org/view/viewer_index.shtml?id=309

to take a look. We occupy four laboratories, three patient examination rooms and a number of support facilities. There are plenty of offices for our staff and investigators. There is a lovely conference room on each floor. Dr. Porszasz worked miracles to move our key research equipment and get it operating over a very busy weekend. Please visit us in our new home!

Our research trainees continue to come and go. Dr. Hester van der Vaart finished her year with us and returned to Holland. Dr. Dan Cannon, who had just finished his PhD work at the University of Leeds, came to do post-doctoral work with Dr. Harry Rossiter. He joins a long line of individuals supported by the Thomas L. Petty Visiting Scholar Fund, funded through PERF by Alvin Grancell. In the New Year, we are expecting doctoral level trainees from Italy, Brazil and Taiwan (that's three different Continents!).

Don't forget to sign on to the PERF website (perf2ndwind.org). We're featuring downloadable issues of Chris Garvey's great newsletter "Lungevity". Please visit Vlady Rozenbaum's website **COPD-alert.com**.

I have to remember to acknowledge the Grancell-Burns Chair in the Rehabilitative Sciences for facilitating my own efforts. Because of this support, I'm able to devote my time to a number of projects that would be difficult to accommodate otherwise. These include participation in international document writing groups composing statements on pulmonary rehabilitation, muscle function in COPD and exercise testing outcomes. I've become active in the COPD Foundation as well as my long-standing involvement with the American Thoracic Society. I continue to log a lot of air miles (I'm approaching 2 million miles with United), giving lectures at widely scattered locations. This year interesting locales included Romania, Poland, Austria, Italy and Switzerland...I did my best to disseminate the latest in rehabilitation research.

I'm glad to report that Mary Burns continues to be active and healthy; we benefit from her continued participation in our research. Brian Tiep continues to do amazing work – reinventing the way doctors interact with their patients. He is amazing in other ways, having taken a bicycle ride from Los Angeles to San Francisco to celebrate his 70th birthday. We value the assistance we receive from Jean Hughes and Pete Pettler, who help us to perform our duties as a non-profit corporation and keep us out of trouble. We're lucky to have the participation of Bill Stringer, Chris Garvey, Jim Barnett, Barbara Borak, Vlady Rosenbaum and Rubye Richie.

This is the part of the letter where we ask for your support. This is our annual appeal; the only time you will be solicited. Our overhead is very low. I can assure you that your donation will be used efficiently to promote research and education in the fields of rehabilitation and COPD. We know how to squeeze every last cent out of your dollars! All of our Board members contribute their services. Your donations are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully acknowledged in writing. We hope to hear from you.

We wish you and yours all the best for the holiday season and wish you a healthy and happy New Year.

Sincerely,



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