



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

LIFESTYLE CHANGES MAY PREVENT PULMONARY HYPERTENSION AND DISABILITY

The Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) held a congressional briefing to generate support for legislation to prevent pulmonary hypertension. Presenters at the forum were representatives from the PHA, members from Congress House and Senate, a consumer advocate and a researcher of pulmonary hypertension.

Summary. Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is arteriosclerosis just in the lungs. The blood vessels and arteries that carry blood to the lungs are narrowed and the heart has to work harder to pump blood. The PH disorder is associated with other diseases such as the liver. Without treatment of PHD, heart disease may be a result. Symptoms of PHD may include breathlessness, fatigue, dizziness, chest pain, fainting, and pain in arms, legs and abdomen. There is legislation to address issues related to PH. The “Pulmonary Hypertension Research Act of 2011”, is designed to encourage research and carry out an educational campaign with respect to pulmonary hypertension. The legislation is to promote awareness among health care professionals through the National Institutes of Health (National Heart and Lung Blood Institute). The research initiatives address etiology, relationship to other diseases, evaluation of new treatments, and training of new clinicians and investigators. In addition, information is gathered on prevalence and early diagnosis of the disorder. symptoms of PH, and current diagnostic criteria of FDA approved therapies.

Disability Prevention Medical interventions for the cardiovascular system can prevent diminished health that contributes to disability. The PH disorder can diminish health that results in fatigue to the point where it is a work disability. Medications to treat PH and improve function are designed to 1) relax blood vessels; 2) block blood vessel constrictors so the lungs produce more of their own natural vasodilators, and 3) lifestyle changes under medical care that affect the cardiovascular system. Results from medications are still in question and they are expensive. Lifestyle interventions are helpful for cardiovascular disorders and may also be effective for PH that retain function and prevent or ameliorate disability.

Activity Discussions were held with experts on PH concerning the effectiveness of lifestyle changes for improving function and prevention of diminished health that can contribute to disability.

Principle There should be exploration of effective interventions of lifestyle changes that improve or protect functional living to prevent disability.