

Health Trends

Support And Treatment Options Offer Help For Lung Cancer Patients

(NAPSA)—Imagine being a mother to three beautiful children, married to a caring husband, in good health. Now imagine being told you have lung cancer.

That was Jan Lesser. “When I was diagnosed with lung cancer I was devastated,” she said. “Here I am, a non-smoker, in the prime of my life and I have lung cancer.”

Lesser is not alone. In fact, nearly 13 percent of lung cancer patients have never smoked. According to the American Cancer Society, this year alone 157,200 Americans will die from lung cancer—more than breast, prostate and colorectal cancers combined. The overall five-year survival rate for all stages of lung cancer is only 15 percent.

Women in the United States have the highest lung cancer mortality rate in the world. Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in African-American men and women. Within the Hispanic population, lung cancer is the third most frequently diagnosed cancer among women and second among men.

Generally, lung cancer begins in one lung and, if left untreated, can spread to lymph nodes or other tissues in the chest, including the other lung and then to more distant parts of the body, including bones, the liver and the brain.

Treatment options are determined by the type and stage of the cancer and may include surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy. Also, a new lung cancer pill was approved earlier this year by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration for treating advanced non-small-cell lung cancer, after chemotherapy has stopped working. Lesser began taking this new drug in November 2001 and, recently, she and her husband celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

Support and education are two important elements, when it comes to battling this disease. The Alliance for Lung Cancer Support and Education (ALCASE) offers peer-to-peer support via the Phone Buddy program. This program connects people to volunteers who have gone through similar experiences. Any person affected by the lung disease can become a buddy.

Training materials are provided to guide phone buddies in their role as a peer counselor.

Each person can make a difference by supporting those with lung cancer, raising awareness about the disease and advocating for better treatment options and more research funding.

For more information on lung cancer or how to become a Phone Buddy, contact ALCASE at 800-298-2436 or visit www.alcase.org.