

# Health Awareness

## Understanding Lung Diseases

(NAPSA)—A recent, national survey shed light on Americans' experiences getting diagnosed with a certain group of lung diseases. Here are a few things you should know.

### The Survey

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation (PFF) commissioned the survey of 600 U.S. adults with support from molecular diagnostics company Veracyte, Inc. The survey was designed to advance understanding of patients' experiences getting diagnosed with interstitial lung diseases (ILDs), including one of the most common and deadly ILDs, a disease known as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). This is a condition in which lung tissue becomes thickened, stiff and scarred, and the lungs lose their ability to transfer oxygen into the bloodstream. There is no known cure for IPF.

### The Findings

ILDs are difficult to diagnose. The PFF survey discovered:

#### *Symptoms*

- The most common ILD symptoms among survey participants were shortness of breath (77 percent), cough (53 percent) and fatigue and weakness (38 percent). Any persistence of these symptoms suggests it's time to see a doctor—and that an ILD may be the cause.

- Most survey respondents ignored their symptoms for some time, thinking they were “just getting older.”

#### *Diagnosis Delays and Misdiagnosis*

- 42 percent of survey respondents endured a year or more between the time they first experienced symptoms and the time they received a diagnosis.

- 55 percent of respondents were misdiagnosed at least once.

- The most common misdiagnoses were asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis.

- Among those who were misdi-



**The sooner someone is diagnosed with a serious condition called interstitial lung disease, the sooner helpful treatments can start.**

agnosed, the misdiagnoses persisted for nearly a year.

#### *Testing*

- On average, respondents endured six pulmonary lung function tests, five chest X-rays, and two bronchoscopies before receiving a diagnosis.

- 45 percent of survey participants underwent surgical lung biopsy—a painful and expensive procedure.

#### *Emotional and Employment Challenges*

- 43 percent of respondents did not feel family or friends understood what they were going through.

- 22 percent had to go on disability or retire because of the time that diagnosis was taking.

“These survey results are a wake-up call,” said Dr. David Lederer, PFF senior medical adviser. “We need to raise awareness that chronic cough and breathlessness during exertion are key symptoms of pulmonary fibrosis. It is my hope that these results will help make the diagnostic process faster and less stressful to patients.”

### To Learn More

For more information about ILDs and IPF, visit [www.pulmonaryfibrosis.org](http://www.pulmonaryfibrosis.org) or call (844) 825-5733. For more information about Veracyte and genomic tests that can help doctors make treatment decisions, visit [www.veracyte.com](http://www.veracyte.com).