

## **PHAware: Building Grassroots Connections with the Media**

In 2001, the Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) created a CD-ROM, including an 8 minute video introduction, designed to help patients explain this complicated, rare and, as yet, incurable (but increasingly treatable) illness to their relatives and friends. The CD-ROM showed large success in fulfilling its purpose and began to be used by physicians to explain the illness to their patients.

In 2003, PHA found a new use for the *Understanding PH* CD-ROM—it is perfect for educating the media about PH. Through the PHAware campaign, PHA members received a copy of the CD-ROM and a brochure with information about how to approach local print and electronic media with their story.

The CD-ROM allowed participants to explain pulmonary hypertension in a clear and graphic manner. The brochure encouraged them to follow a showing of the CD-ROM with their own story, thereby developing a local “news hook” for reporters. PHA offered to provide as many CD-ROMs as our advocates could use in presentations. Just over 100 participants were sent an average of 4.5 CD-ROMs, resulting in approximately 450 media visits.

The success of the PHAware campaign helped PHA move from four identified press hits in all of 1999 to between one and five press hits per day in 2005. PHA is currently updating the CD-ROM and brochure for re-release during PH Awareness Month (November) 2005.

**Presented By:** Katherine Kroner, Advocacy and Awareness Associate, Pulmonary Hypertension Association, [www.phassociation.org](http://www.phassociation.org)