

New American Lung Association report focuses on COPD risks for women

A new report by the American Lung Association focuses on women's risks of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, also known as emphysema and chronic bronchitis).

According to the report, women are 37 percent more likely to have COPD than men, and half of them don't even know they have it, according to a new American Lung Association Report. "Taking Her Breath Away: The Rise of COPD in Women" examines the nation's third leading cause of death and its increased prevalence among women in the U.S.

Mary Kurth, COPD Program Director of the American Lung Association in Arizona, said the report is an eye opener for women.

"As people get older, they start experiencing some symptoms," Kurth said. "Under diagnosis is a real problem. Many people just chalk it up to 'I'm out of shape. I'm getting older. I have this cough and it won't go away, but I can



live with it."

According to the report, more than seven million women in the United States currently have COPD, compared to six million men with the same condition. The number of deaths among women from COPD has more than quadrupled since 1980, and since 2000 the disease has claimed the lives of

more women than men in this country each year.

The report also looks at other correlating issues, including industry marketing and lifestyle choices.

According to the report, the rise of COPD in women is closely tied to the success of tobacco industry marketing.

Cigarette smoking was rare among women in the early 20th century, but started increasing in earnest in the late 1960s after the tobacco industry began aggressively targeting its deadly products specifically to women. While nationwide anti-tobacco campaigns and policy changes have successfully decreased smoking rates for both women and men in the recent past, the tobacco industry's success in addicting women smokers long ago is still resulting in new cases of COPD and other tobacco-related illness in those women as they have aged.

"It is important that health providers, women and their families take steps to address this deadly disease," Kurth said.

To download the report, visit www.lung.org/copdinwomen.

For more information about the Breathe Easy Arizona services, please visit www.breathesasyaz.com.

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