



# Physicians' HEALTH Program

## 30 Years of Change Special Anniversary Issue

The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society  
30 Years of Change – Transforming Lives

Winter 2016

**W**e are celebrating the 30th year of the Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society Physicians' Health Program by sharing 30 stories of how the program changes lives and saves careers. Go to [www.foundationpamedsoc.org](http://www.foundationpamedsoc.org) throughout the year to read new stories every month. We are providing a few examples in this publication!

## endowment

noun | en-dow·ment | \mənt

### NOUN

the action of endowing something or someone.

*Giving to the endowment means your gift, combined with others' previous investments, provides a continued, guaranteed and growing funding stream.*

In the last ten years, the PHP Endowment Fund has disbursed more than \$1.4 million to support thousands of physicians who have benefitted from our program. Thank you to the many generous donors for investing in the original endowment campaign. You provided the ground work for this perpetual fund. This year as we celebrate 30 years of service, we invite you to make an investment so that *together* we can continue to transform lives.

*Look for your invitation in the mail to be a part of a special anniversary campaign to make sure that the program is available to generations of future physicians.*

**2016**  
Give to Ensure  
30 More Years of  
Life-Changing  
Impact

**2015**  
PHP  
Endowment  
Fund=  
\$4.5 M

Continued  
Program  
**Growth**

Ongoing  
**Donor**  
Investment

**Perpetual**  
Fund =  
Stability

**2005**  
\$1.3 M  
Establishes  
the PHP  
Endowment

# PHP Through the Years

The Physicians' Health Program (PHP), a program of The Foundation, provides support and advocacy to physicians struggling with addiction or physical or mental challenges. The program also offers information and support to the families of impaired physicians and encourages their involvement in the recovery process.

"One in 10 people suffers from addiction, and physicians are no different than the rest of the population," says Raymond C. Truex Jr., MD, FAANS, FACS, and the chair of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. "Our campaign highlights moments in time when the PHP changed someone's life, and recognizes the influence that the PHP has had on individuals' lives for three decades."

"As we begin 2016, I look forward to sharing real stories about those who have been impacted by the program," says the Foundation's Executive Director, Heather Wilson, MSW, CFRE. "Visit the Foundation's website to join us, as we plan to honor those who have selflessly served, celebrate those who are successfully in recovery, remember those who have been lost to addiction and mental health issues, and thank those who have invested time, talent, and treasure."

The PHP has its roots in a volunteer-based, impaired-physician program that began in 1970. Physician volunteers handled casework with assistance from a part-time PAMED staff member. PAMED responded to a growing need for services by hiring a medical director and case managers, and officially started the PHP in 1986.



Abram M. Hostetter, MD, (at left) chaired the Foundation's board from its launch through 2002, and he remembers the milestone fondly. "During my time as board chair, we saw significant development. We incorporated what is now the Physicians' Health Program into the Foundation to impact the lives of doctors. The organization has grown a tremendous amount since the days when we were seemingly a

small committee with one staff person."

Indeed, the program has grown significantly in reputation and in services offered. It is now one of the largest, most fully developed physicians' health programs in the country. The PHP has a cooperative working relationship with PAMED, the State Board of Medicine, and the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine, and is also under contract with the Pennsylvania Dental Association to assist licensed dental professionals. The PHP assists all physicians, physician assistants, medical students, dentists, dental hygienists, and expanded-function dental assistants. Many hospitals, medical staffs, and managed care organizations in Pennsylvania use the services offered by the PHP.

Today, the PHP is needed more than ever. "Physicians are now working more in teams and are not their own bosses anymore," Hostetter says. "In the past, they were able to set their own pace, but they are being pushed to do more than ever. Physicians are under scrutiny, fear the threat of malpractice, and bend to time pressures at the same time they are accountable to more government regulations, licensing, MOC, EHRs, and CME. Teams are economically dependent on the doctor.

"Our culture of chemical support makes it more likely for physicians under pressure to turn to drinking, tranquilizers, pain medicines, and more," he adds. "We need to keep the PHP strong to catch them when they fall."

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## *F*oundation Board Chair

*Raymond Truex Jr., MD, has agreed to lead as the PHP's 30th Anniversary Honorary Endowment Campaign Chairman. One generous donor has committed a \$30,000 matching gift. Your gift to this campaign will help us take full advantage of this opportunity. Visit us to learn more and donate in honor of the 30 Stories of Change at [www.foundationpamedsoc.org](http://www.foundationpamedsoc.org).*

*A special thanks to the following people, who are serving as the Advisory Committee to the Campaign:*

*Raymond Truex Jr., MD, FAANS, FACS,  
Honorary Chair*

*Joanne Bergquist*

*Abram M. Hostetter, MD*

*George Lloyd, MD*

*Cliff Lyons, MD*

*Bernice O'Brien*

*Jon Shapiro, MD, ABAM*

# My Experience with the Pennsylvania Physicians' Health Program

## TINA FELL

When my husband's alcoholism came to light, he went into a rehab center and I went into a crisis. It felt like a hand-grenade had gone off in my living room, and the pieces of my life were flying around me like shrapnel and debris. I honestly didn't know what to hold onto, and what to let blow away. The counselor at the rehab center recommended that I get in touch with the PHP to learn about the voluntary monitoring program for physicians.

Although I was reluctant to share our family secrets and to ask for the help that we needed, I found the phone number on the Internet and called the PHP while my husband was still in inpatient treatment. The reception I got from the PHP was warm and welcoming. **I realized that I didn't have to find my own way, because others had gone before me on this path.**

When I told the PHP counselor that my plan for my husband after his rehab discharge was to administer a breathalyzer test before he went to work, when he came home, before he drove with the kids, etc., I was quite wisely told that I couldn't be a spouse and the sobriety police. What would I do if my husband kept drinking? How could I enforce these rules? What would happen with empty threats and ultimatums that might not work? I listened to

the information about their program and started to have hope that I wouldn't be alone to shoulder the burden of living with an alcoholic.

Fast forward two years, and our family is doing well. I attend Al-Anon meetings, and have found a whole group of people who understand this disease.

I have learned that I am not responsible for anyone else's drinking or sobriety. My husband has a strong AA program and attends 5-6 meetings per week. He has maintained his sobriety by using all the tools available, one of which is the PHP monitoring program. He has random blood and urine tests, and follows the program requirements of meetings and counseling. We don't look at these program requirements as an intrusion or a punishment. Instead, they are a welcome means of accountability. It is a way to re-establish trust and prove that he can "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk."

Alcoholism can't be cured, but it's a disease that can be managed with the right strategy. I am grateful to the PHP for helping us live with alcoholism.



## ANONYMOUS

As a medical student, my experience in the PHP has been quite interesting. Initially, I was hesitant, mainly because I had never imagined myself in a program like this. However, after almost a year in the PHP, I can honestly say that this program is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

My family and closest friends constantly remind me how much better I am since joining the PHP. The staff is very kind and it is clear that they care about you and your well being. My most memorable patient experience that reminded me how great the program has been for me was on my psychiatric rotation. I was talking to one of my patients and another patient happened to be sitting at the table with us. I had never met her before and I felt a very unique connection and understanding with her.

She mentioned that she no longer drinks at all because no one likes being around her when she drinks. This patient went on describing her story, and I was able to relate on a very personal level. I understood her intimately, as my family and friends have been telling me how great I am to be around since I've stopped drinking. Through the PHP, I feel like I am finally in a place where I have always wanted to be. **I feel happier than I ever have before.**

Mainly, I am grateful to PHP for making me a better person and I know I will be a better doctor.



# Saving Lives and Careers

*For 30 years, the PHP has helped more than 3,000 physicians enjoy life without drugs or alcohol and continue to be successful physicians. To learn more about making a contribution or a planned gift to the PHP Endowment contact Marjorie Lamberson, CFRE, at [mlamberson@pamedsoc.org](mailto:mlamberson@pamedsoc.org) or (717) 558-7846.*



**The Foundation**  
of the Pennsylvania Medical Society

Education. Wellness. Excellence. Always.

The Foundation  
of the Pennsylvania Medical Society  
Physicians' Health Program  
Endowment Campaign

Attention:

Marjorie Lamberson, CFRE  
777 East Park Drive  
P.O. Box 8820  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8820



## DEAN STEINBERG, MD

Oct. 12, 1988: DEA agents invaded my home in search of evidence regarding distribution of controlled substances. More than 70,000 doses were registered to me and not accounted for. That day was the first time I ever admitted (to the agents) that I was a drug addict. They had "other ideas." This was the end of life, as I knew it.

My Pa. medical license and DEA registration were suspended/revoked, as were hospital privileges. Felony charges were issued three years later. I had to stop using narcotics and that was not possible.

On Oct. 14, two days later, knowing that my supply was frighteningly low, I did prepare for suicide. I prepared two syringes: one with Midazolam and one filled with Pavulon. They were placed in my top drawer. That same day, an old acquaintance of mine who had previously been in much trouble, accepted my call. He gave me a phone number and said, "You do not have to feel this way anymore." And, he said, "Life can be beyond your wildest dreams."

The phone number *was for the Pennsylvania Physicians' Health Program*. I spoke slightly honestly for the first time about my addiction. They sent a gentleman to my home to escort me to Marworth – a rehabilitation facility. I have been involved with PHP as a *participant, monitor, and committee member* over the past 27+ years with continuous sobriety since day ONE. *PHP provided the framework for my recovery, monitoring, and letters of support whenever needed ... I owe them my life.*

I resumed practicing anesthesia in 1989 and have been professionally successful since that time. This is a direct result of PHP intervention. *My story is a miracle.*

My path would not have been feasible without the support and guidance of PHP.



## RETIRED CASE MANAGER LOU VERNA, MAC, LPC, CIP

It is never more evident to recognize the need for change than those in recovery from the devastation of alcohol, drugs, or mental health issues. Change is a constant shift in anybody's daily life. However, change makes the biggest impact on the individual who is working toward sobriety on a daily basis.

The PHP has demonstrated the ability to support and facilitate change for recovering physicians over the past 30 years. A remarkable achievement accomplished through the program's longevity and dedication of all those involved. The PHP has found its strength in the participants and staff evident through their ability to give back what they have received.

Participants have shown a remarkable ability to address their personal and professional lives with a clearer vision on a daily basis. Members, through their dedication, became more insightful to their needs as people. Through their searching process they learned there was another person within themselves beyond the title of "MD." Participants on numerous occasions spoke about becoming better physicians, taking more time to listen and recognize the needs of their patients.

We all need support in our daily lives. Through its longevity, the PHP will continue to offer balance, support, and growth through its continuing work and accomplishments, ensuring the safety of its participants and the public.

The Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society proudly serves as the 501 (c)(3) philanthropic affiliate of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Charitable Organizations, by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.