

# Committee on Requirements for Pulmonary Function Testing in Social Security Disability Evaluations

## Meeting 2 (Part 2 of 3)

### March 25 Speaker Bios

**Susan Blonshine, RRT**, is one of the country's leading authorities on respiratory therapy, and, specifically, pulmonary function testing. At TechEd, she acts as the chief Cardiopulmonary Diagnostic Specialist and directs all of the company's educational and consultative services.

Susan was one of the first registered respiratory therapists at Ingham Regional Medical Center. She spent more than two decades in the hospital's pulmonary function lab, where she took part in pioneering research on pulmonary rehabilitation, sleep and asthma. She left Ingham Regional in 1996 and went on to found TechEd Consultants.

Susan is a lifetime member of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), and has many board appointments related to respiratory care, asthma, and clinical laboratory standards. She has published extensively in the field of respiratory therapy. She is co-author of [Spirometry Quality: The Essentials](#) and has contributed chapters to several other textbooks. She was involved in the development of the AARC's Clinical Practice Guidelines and the American Thoracic Society pulmonary function policy and procedure manual, which is used today around the globe. Susan has collected numerous awards and honors, but says her driving motivation is to ensure that patients get accurate test results and appropriate treatment.

**Lee Fogle** is the administrator of Pulmonary Success Circles while also serving as group leader of two Circles. He is a retired technology entrepreneur and CEO, and is a patient living with pulmonary fibrosis. Diagnosed with advanced, end-stage pulmonary fibrosis in 2020 he was prescribed supplemental oxygen 24 hours a day, which was followed by a period of inactivity and depression. He came close to death by 2021 but he made the decision to battle for his life rather than plan to die, so he began pulmonary rehabilitation combined with a commitment to daily increased exercise, nutrition and lung training. Today he walks 5 miles a day, exercises vigorously 7 days a week, plays golf, paddleboards, hikes, bicycles and swims, all while carrying an oxygen tank in a backpack.

**Lisa Hall** is a COPD Foundation Captain for Minnesota and serves on the Propeller App advisory board. She is interested in traveling to Capitol Hill as a patient advocate with the COPD Foundation to represent people with Asthma, COPD, and chronic respiratory conditions. Lisa has had asthma all her life, which has turned into COPD. She is on disability because of her condition. Lisa was on prednisone for 5 years as a child which could have contributed to her spinal issues resulting in fusions or metal rods in all but 2 vertebrae in her back.

**Elizabeth (Elle) Kellner** was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at 4.5 months old and is a double-lung and kidney transplant recipient. She is proud to have accomplished so many of her dreams including studying abroad, graduating college, getting married, traveling the world, and starting a non-profit for pediatric patients at her local hospital. In her free time, she loves yoga, cooking, dancing, and going to the beach.

**Lisa Reed** was eagerly anticipating her 70th birthday in 2022. She had plans to travel to Italy and was looking forward to spending more quality time with her grandchildren. But a persistent cough, worsened by a bout of COVID-19, led her to the emergency room in her hometown of Sante Fe. There, a series of tests, including a high-resolution chest CT of her lungs, revealed something unexpected: pulmonary fibrosis (PF).

Like many others diagnosed with PF, Reed had never heard of the disease. Her internet search was startling, revealing that PF causes progressive and irreversible scarring in the lungs. It is part of a family of over 200 interstitial lung diseases (ILD) that affect more than 250,000 Americans. Fortunately, Reed was diagnosed in the early stages of the disease. She quickly immersed herself in learning everything she could about PF. She discovered the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's (PFF) website, absorbing fact sheets, watching webinars, and exploring clinical trials and opportunities to get involved. A friend of Reed's who is a nurse practitioner suggested she reach out to the ILD clinic at National Jewish Hospital (NJH) in Denver, a PFF Care Center Network site. She received care there from a multidisciplinary team of doctors including a pulmonologist, rheumatologist, cardiologist, and oncologist. She began an antifibrotic treatment to slow the progression of the disease. Reed now sees an NJH-trained practitioner at the University of New Mexico – Albuquerque, who is now only an hour away. Reed recognizes the importance of seeking nearby care with ILD experts and understands that it's not guaranteed due to limited numbers of providers and treatment delays.

**Mary C. Townsend, Dr.P.H.**, is a Spirometry and Epidemiology Consultant for industrial and research clients and adjunct faculty at the School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh. She is lead author of the American College of Occupational and Environmental

Medicine (ACOEM) Position Statements on Spirometry in the Occupational Setting, and initiated and initially chaired an American Thoracic Society (ATS) committee developing an Official Technology Standard "Spirometry in the Occupational Setting." She frequently presents workshops and lectures on the interpretation and pitfalls of Occupational Spirometry at annual ACOEM conferences, and has taught at American Association of Occupational Health Nurses conferences, and ATS Sunrise Seminars

Dr. Townsend has taught NIOSH-Approved Spirometry and Spirometry Refresher courses for 35 years; teaching not only what the recommendations/regulations are for conducting tests and interpreting results, but also why the recommendations/regulations requirements were developed. She has also consulted with various clients to develop quality assurance programs and consult on spirometry performance. Major clients have included OSHA's Directorate of Standards and Guidance, US Library of Congress, General Motors, Dow Chemical Corporation, US Steel, Lubrizol Corporation, Aurora Health, and others.

Before working as an Independent Consultant, she worked as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Visiting Scientist and Research Epidemiologist at NIOSH, and as an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Pittsburgh.