

My main point that I want to stress is that together we are a **TEAM**.

T- Together

E - Education

A - Associations

M - Medication

T – TOGETHER: We do things together. We do many of our daily routines together and we do many social activities together. We visit the doctor together. We have learned that it is important for another set of ears to hear explanations and instructions from the doctor. We both contribute answers to doctor's questions. We both ask the doctor questions. When we leave we make sure that what we heard was the same for both of us, if not, we clarify the differences. We change his medications together, and change his dressings together. 2007 was a year that both of us needed medical care. I had four surgeries in which I needed care, so together we took care of each other. Frank is able to care for himself physically. He helps with household chores and when I needed care, he took care of me. So together we are a team.

E - EDUCATION: We both feel that it is important to learn all that we can to try to understand this disease. We are here at this convention learn, share and try to become familiar with all that we possibly can. We want to know the latest there is to know about the medications, research and expectations for the future. We read all the literature that is sent to us. The National Support Group in Silver Spring, Maryland has been most helpful and we appreciate all the support and information that they provide. It is because of them that we found Dr. Park. We would say that Dr. Park is one of the most caring and best doctors that could care for Frank at this time. She treats Frank with the appropriate medical care that he needs and provides ongoing opportunities for us to learn and be educated about his situation and how to live with it. Frank has improved tremendously under her care and we couldn't be more appreciative.

A – ASSOCIATIONS: *Support groups, family and friends.* We travel quite a bit. We try to maintain the life style that we had before Frank was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension. We have a large family and we continue visiting our children, family and friends throughout the U.S. We went to Germany and France last summer and we are planning a trip to Scandinavia in August. As a caregiver, when traveling, I take the responsibility of packing all his necessities. I make sure he has all his medication, syringes, dressing changes and all the other supplies. When at home, we entertain and visit friends frequently and enjoy cultural activities in our community. Frank is has always been a volunteer and he continues his volunteering. He provides transportation for individuals who cannot drive to doctor's appointments and other important places. We both volunteer for the Lutheran Missions Society to assist with their charity operations. He does not do any strenuous work, but it provides a means of self worth which is very important. These are important support groups that help us maintain a lifestyle that is important to us.

M - MEDICATIONS: As a caregiver, I am most needed to remember all the steps to do when changing his pump and medications. I am responsible to order Frank's medication, supplies and dressings. We work together to administer his medications and change his pump. We have a routine that I have certain steps to do and there are certain steps that Frank does. When at home, we always work at the same place and we take out the supplies together. I fill the syringes, he checks his pump, and each step along the way is a joint adventure. This way, we assure each other that we have not missed a step. We can accomplish his change in about five minutes which does not take much time out of our day. Because of his excellent care from Dr. Park and the medications that she has prescribed, Frank is feeling much better. His main symptom is that he accumulates fluid in his abdomen. He is accumulating much less fluid now than two years ago and he has much more energy. I had two stays in the hospital during 2007 and I trained our daughter to come in to assist him with his change, however in an emergency, Frank could do it himself. We have all the steps written down so that he could review them and make sure he doesn't miss a step along the way.

As a **CAREGIVER**, I feel that my main responsibility is to be an advocate for his care. I give him emotional support, and I do the usual things that a wife does in a marriage and as a homemaker. I observe any changes in his physical, mental and emotional behavior and discuss it with him and if necessary relay it to the doctor. I give him support in his endeavors, but he also supports mine. I continue to have my social outings with friends and together we do a lot of social activities. He has continued to lead as normal a life as he possibly can. A **POSITIVE** attitude has been one important aspect in his care as I believe there will be improved treatments and his health will continue to improve.