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Dear fellow Wyoming PH patient,

I was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension in 2003, and I personally know the physical and emotional strain of this disease. I am writing to invite you to join the newly organized and first-ever Wyoming pulmonary hypertension support group.

Yes, there really are other individuals with pulmonary hypertension (PH) in Wyoming, and we are scattered throughout the state. By searching and posting on Internet message boards and by asking friends, I have found PH patients in Afton, Auburn, Evanston, Green River, Laramie, Rock Springs, and Riverton. As the support group becomes active, I am sure others can be found.

Coping with Pulmonary Hypertension can be difficult. It is especially difficult in a rural Wyoming because patients are often hundreds of miles from their treatment center and their specialists. Individuals who live in more populated areas have access to monthly support groups or access to other patients with similar experiences. In the past, I struggled to find someone who understood my limitations and frustrations. I wanted to ask someone about their PH treatment and the side effects of the medication. I wanted to find some emotional support. I could not find any PH patients nearby, so I joined the Pulmonary Hypertension Association, and I started a diary on PHcentral. I use the Internet message boards (PHcentral.org and PHAssociation.org), but I prefer to establish a network of contacts that are geographically closer. Sometimes it is better to actually speak to a person on the phone or face-to-face.

In the five years since my diagnosis, I have been fortunate to establish a friendship with two Wyoming PHers: Carol and Cricket. Cricket and I would like to organize a monthly newsletter for Wyoming PHers and host at least two face-to-face meetings a year so PHers in Wyoming can benefit from the support of others who understand. Of course, the face-to-face meetings would be planned around Wyoming's weather patterns. Late spring/early summer and late summer/early fall would be perfect for these meetings although we are aware that it can and does snow in Wyoming during those times. The meeting site(s) will be determined later.

Please consider this invitation and the benefit a Wyoming PH support group would have for you and your caregiver. Please share this letter with any Wyoming PH patients that you know. The Wyoming PH Support Group can help you cope with this disease by connecting with others and by hoping for a cure. I look forward to meeting each of you.

Nancy Stearns