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Contact:  
Ifdy Perez, COPD Foundation  
Email: [iperez@copdfoundation.org](mailto:iperez@copdfoundation.org)  
Tel: 1-866-731-2673, ext. 398  
Cell: 202-591-7565

## **Every Four Minutes an American Dies of COPD 24 Million Americans Have COPD, 12 Million Don't Know It**

**Washington, D.C. (November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009)**— COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the US<sup>i</sup>. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health, approximately 24 million Americans are living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) but half of the affected population is undiagnosed or unaware that they have COPD<sup>ii</sup>.

“These prevalence numbers for COPD are outrageous,” says John Walsh, President of the COPD Foundation. “COPD kills more Americans each year than diabetes, breast cancer, lung cancer and kidney disease, and it’s the only chronic disease increasing in prevalence.”

The COPD Foundation is the leading the effort to bring attention to the state of COPD in the U.S. and worldwide today, World COPD Day. The World Health Organization (WHO) designated the third Wednesday of November to be World COPD Day in effort to bring attention to this growing global problem.

The WHO estimates 210 million individuals worldwide have COPD and total deaths are expected to increase more than thirty percent in the next ten years<sup>iii</sup>. It is estimated to be the third cause of death by 2020<sup>iii</sup>. Every four minutes an individual dies of COPD<sup>iv</sup>.

COPD kills more women than men each year<sup>ii</sup>. In 2006, COPD killed more women than breast cancer, Alzheimer’s and diabetes<sup>v</sup>.

COPD cost the U.S. government approximately \$42.6 billion in both direct and indirect expenses in 2007<sup>vi</sup>. A majority of those expenses are due to hospitalizations, which can be prevented with better diagnosis and management practices.

“Besides the lack of awareness and the growing prevalence in the U.S., there is still an unacceptable disproportionate allocation of research funds for COPD,” says Walsh.

For fiscal year 2010, the National Institutes of Health designated only \$79 million for COPD research<sup>vii</sup>, which killed 124,583 in 2006<sup>i</sup>. In contrast, the NIH budgeted \$1.1 billion for diabetes research<sup>vii</sup>, which killed 72,449 Americans that same year<sup>i</sup>. The NIH

also budgeted \$769 million for breast cancer research<sup>vii</sup> which killed 41,000<sup>v</sup>, and \$540 million for kidney disease<sup>vii</sup> which killed 45,344<sup>i</sup>.

“COPD is a condition that’s almost always preventable and mostly treatable,” says Walsh. “There’s no excuse why over half of the individuals with COPD in America are undiagnosed, without access to therapies that can relieve symptoms and improve their quality of life. We need to wake up America and address this epidemic.”

## Resources

- John Walsh is available for interviews by contacting Ifdy Perez at 202-591-7565 or [iperez@copdfoundation.org](mailto:iperez@copdfoundation.org).
- Patient stories available at [www.youtube.com/copdfoundation](http://www.youtube.com/copdfoundation).

## About the COPD Foundation

The COPD Foundation is dedicated to developing and supporting programs, which improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The COPD Foundation has several programs dedicated to informing, empowering, educating, and engaging individuals affected by COPD, including both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals, their families and friends, and their medical professionals. For more information, please visit: <http://www.copdfoundation.org>.

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<sup>i</sup> *Deaths: Final Data for 2006*, National Vital Statistics Reports, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Vol. 57 No. 14, April 17, 2009.

[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57\\_14.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_14.pdf). Accessed 11/18/09.

<sup>ii</sup> *Facts About Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/copd/copdfaq.htm>. Accessed 11/18/09.

<sup>iii</sup> *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Fact Sheet*, World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs315/en/index.html>. Accessed 11/18/09.

<sup>iv</sup> National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, *COPD Learn More Breathe Better*<sup>®</sup>, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/copd/what-is-copd/index.htm>. Accessed 11/18/09.

<sup>v</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Breast Cancer Statistics: Top 10 Causes of Death for Women in the United States*, 2005. <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/statistics>. Accessed 11/18/09.

<sup>vi</sup> *Morbidity and Mortality: 2007 Chart Book on Cardiovascular, Lung and Blood Diseases*, pp 17, Chart 2-24, National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute.

<sup>vii</sup> *Estimates of Funding for Various Research, Condition and Disease Categories (RCDC): FY2005-2010*, Table Published January 15, 2009, Revised May 7, 2009. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. <http://report.nih.gov/rcdc/categories>. Accessed 11/18/09.