

Polio survivor: Hello, thanks for taking my call. I called to tell you about my first visit to the new pulmonologist's office.

Post-Polio Health International (PHI): Hi, how did it go?

Polio survivor: OK, I guess. He asked about my machine and how often I used it. And, he assured me he would get the details from the Astral 150 through my home healthcare company.

PHI: Good. Yes, they can do that. And, that info is more accurate than memory. What else happened?

Polio survivor: We just talked. He asked me questions about my life and the jobs I had had. He didn't ask about my breathing.

PHI: When he was asking you questions he was watching you breathe, move, observing how long of sentences you used, etc, etc. He was checking you out! I am sure he noticed your scoliosis. That affects your breathing ability, too.

Polio survivor: I think you may be right. At one point he moved his chair saying, "Let me move. You can't move your head this way very well, can you?"

PHI: Good for him! Asking you about your life and what you did and observing that you came to his office on a snowy day in your power chair tells him a lot about you and your expectations in life.

Polio survivor: Do you think? We scheduled another appointment, although I am doing OK. I told him that if it is too cold or if I can't get a driver I may cancel. He seemed just fine with that.

PHI: Good! You know it is so important that you have a physician who knows you when you are well, so they can be your advocate when you get sick. Health professionals who don't know you and only see you in the ER or in a hospital bed don't understand. Keep him! Educate him a little more each time about you and your situation. He will come in handy, even if he isn't a "post-polio expert."

Polio survivor: OK. At least he didn't walk in and say, "We need to decide how much oxygen to put you on," like the last guy did.

PHI: Ahhh, remember. But, hooray, you kept looking ...! The polio survivors who avoid physicians who see them face-to-face and haven't befriended one in their area, can be in trouble when a crisis arises. Glad you persisted. Let's stay in touch and take it step by step. ■

International Ventilator Users Network (IVUN) is part of Post-Polio Health International. For more information about using home mechanical ventilation part or full time, visit www.ventnews.org and www.facebook.com/HMVnews/.

The image shows a website header for the International Ventilator Users Network (IVUN). The logo includes the text "IVUN INTERNATIONAL VENTILATOR USERS NETWORK" and "an affiliate of Post-Polio Health International". To the right, it says "CONNECTING VENTILATOR USERS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AND INDUSTRY" and "CONTACT US". Below the header is a navigation menu with several items: "VENTILATOR-ASSISTED LIVING", "HOME VENTILATOR GUIDE", "RESOURCE DIRECTORY 2016", "RECHARGE CHANCES", and "HOME MECHANICAL VENTILATION THE BASICS". At the bottom, there is a "Sponsored by" logo for "Passy Med" and a footer with social media icons (Facebook, Twitter) and contact information: "IVUN 427 Linden Street #110 Shelton, MD 21156-2000 301-484-6400 info@ventusers.org". A "JOIN IVUN OR DONATE" button is also present.