



## **Team Alpha-1, Including Three "Carriers," to Compete at US Transplant Games in Pittsburgh This Week**



PITTSBURGH, PA – Three Alpha-1 “carriers” will be leading the way when Team Alpha-1 competes in the 2008 US Transplant Games this week. The Games begin Friday and run through July 16 with a total of five Team Alpha-1 members involved.

The five are Ronald Hargarten, Pamela Hawver, Deborah Labud, Robert James and Jerry Killens. They will compete in the categories of bowling, golf, and 5K races.

The Team Alpha-1 members have all undergone life-saving transplant surgery due to complications from Alpha-1.



### **Bob James, liver transplant recipient**

Interestingly, three of the competitors were Alpha-1 “carriers,” yet all three needed liver transplants. Hargarten, Hawver and James all were diagnosed as “MZ” phenotypes before their severe liver failure required transplant surgery.

It is commonly assumed in the Alpha-1 community that carriers have little or no risk of disease, let alone severe disease. Hargarten, Hawver and James are living proof of how false and misleading that assumption can be.

The other members of the team, Labud and Killens, are both lung transplant recipients.

The National Kidney Foundation hosts the Transplant Games every two years. It is the only national athletic competition of its kind. The event commemorates the success of transplant surgery by honoring the lives of recipients of all life-saving organs, friends and families, living donors, donor families, and transplant professionals.

One function of the Transplant Games is to raise awareness of the importance of health and fitness and give hope to members of the community who struggle with similar debilitating illnesses. By pushing their limits and testing their physical potential, Team Alpha-1 can help prove the success of transplant surgery and the role it plays in living a full and productive lifestyle.

**Deborah Labud received a lung transplant in 2001**

Team Alpha-1 is a program of the Alpha-1 Foundation. Talecris Biotherapeutics is the anchor sponsor.