

# Inside PPTA

## MEET THE PPTA STAFF

### Thomas B. Lilburn

SENIOR DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



**Q How long have you been with PPTA?**

I joined PPTA in April of 2015, but actually have known PPTA and some of the staff and worked with the organization for more than 20 years. The organization has grown, but the people in the industry are still great to work with.

**Q What do you focus on in your role as Senior Director, Government Relations?**

My efforts are directed at ensuring access to plasma protein therapies in the U.S. in the federal arena. Most policies—set legislatively by the U.S. Congress or administratively by the Health & Human Services Department—affect whether patients can access their medicines. Even commercial payers look to federal agencies as they set their policies. Building meaningful working relationships with congressional committees and individual Members of Congress is essential to having a voice to advance and protect the interests of our industry.

**Q Tell us about your background?**

I graduated with an undergraduate degree in biology and after a side trip as a Marine Captain and a subsequent MBA, I worked in the broader brand pharmaceutical industry for over three decades. Like many, I started as a representative calling on physicians, “carrying a bag” as it’s often referred to by my colleagues. I was involved in the early launch of Gamimune-N, and with experience in management, product marketing, managed care, and public affairs—plus an interest in government—I was asked to develop and manage a national state affairs program for Bayer. That’s when I first met the Association folks—Jan M. Bult and Julie Birkofer—during some tumultuous times, sitting on a PPTA steering

committee. The experience of sitting on the other side of the desk has been invaluable in understanding the needs and problems facing the industry. Eventually I was asked to go to Washington, D.C. and work on federal issues like Medicare Part D, importation, and the Affordable Care Act.

**Q What is most rewarding about working in this industry?**

The ability to actually meet and know patients who truly benefit from the therapies our members make. These aren’t lifestyle drugs or elective surgeries. These are lifesaving medicines for real people who—without the innovation, dedication, and entrepreneurship of our members—would suffer great harm.

**Q Who has been an inspiration to you in your life?**

A teacher. During my 9th grade in high school, I had an irascible, bombastic science teacher that could explain science in an unconventional way that piqued your interest—it started with you asking questions about how things worked and not stopping until you’ve found the answer. I’ve been fascinated and involved in science, in one way or another, ever since.

**Q Tell us something that may surprise us about you?**

I used to have long hair and drive a 3-wheeled Harley Davidson “chopper” with racing slicks and no mufflers. ●