



The *Asthma* COALITION Update

Summer 2009

2009 N.C. Asthma Summit

The 2009 North Carolina Asthma Summit was held on May 14 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Conference Center in Durham. Sponsored by the Asthma Alliance of North Carolina (AANC), this exciting event attracted participants from various backgrounds and organizations across the state. The Summit featured our first ever Physician Panel, a session which allowed participants to submit questions regarding the theme of "Coming Together to Improve Asthma Outcomes" to a panel of talented N.C. physicians. Special thanks to Dr. Ed Davis (Pitt Children's Clinic); Dr. Laura Gerald (Community Care of N.C.); Dr. Tom Irons (ECU Brody School of Medicine); Dr. Cheryl Lynn Walker McGill (Carolina Medical Center); Dr. Scott Nash (Nash Asthma and Allergy); and Dr. Don Russell (Allergy Partners of Western N.C.) for being part of this panel.

Afternoon breakout sessions included the following topics: Asthma Devices and Spirometry Update; the N.C. Clean Diesel Campaign, the American Lung Association's

Breathe Well, Live Well Program; Asthma Coalition Showcase Panel; Healthy Homes Parts I and II; the Living Healthy Chronic Disease Self Management Program; Highlighting the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Asthma Education Program; Keeping Up to Date with Asthma Guidelines; Air Quality and the Workplace; Success Stories in Environmental Assessment; and Past, Present, and Future Policies to Eliminate Exposure to Secondhand Smoke.

Additional Summit highlights included a message from the N.C. Division of Public Health, presented by former Chronic Disease and Injury Section chief Dr. Marcus Plescia, and a presentation on Asheville's very successful "My Healthy Life" program by Sharon Rohrer. Storyboards showcasing local asthma coalition activities and initiatives were also one of the most popular and informative aspects of the day.

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Presentations are available on the N.C. Asthma Program's web site at www.asthma.ncdhhs.gov/ncapAANC.htm. Please contact Caroline at (919) 707-5209, or Caroline.Chappell@ncmail.net with any

questions about the Summit or for additional information. Information about future N.C. Asthma Summits, including opportunities to become involved with planning, will be forthcoming! ♦

Secondhand Smoke: New Law on the Horizon to Protect North Carolinians

On January 2, 2010, a new law will go into effect that places North Carolina in the national spotlight regarding protecting people from exposure to secondhand smoke. This law will eliminate smoking in nearly all restaurants and bars across the state. It also increases local governments' authority to further regulate smoking in public places within their own communities, a repeal of past preemptive restrictions that have been in place since the early 1990s.

Representative Hugh Holliman of Davidson County, a longtime champion of efforts to eliminate public exposure to secondhand smoke, introduced House Bill 2, "An Act to Prohibit Smoking in Certain Public Places and Certain Places of Employment," early in the legislative session. Supporters from across the state attended committee meetings and followed the bill's progress closely as it was debated in the House and Senate. It was ratified May 14 and signed by Governor Beverly Perdue on May 19. "This is an important step to protect North Carolinians living with asthma or allergies," said Caroline Chappell, director of the North Carolina Asthma Program. "Secondhand smoke can trigger a severe asthma attack, so this new legislation will enable those living with asthma to enjoy more smoke-free places."

House Bill 2 – now Session Law 2009-213 – expands on legislation that has been introduced in past sessions, and builds upon the local authority established in prior bills. North Carolina has passed legislation in recent years making all school districts tobacco-free, banning smoking in state government



buildings and vehicles, and authorizing local governments to pass their own regulations for government buildings and vehicles. By eliminating smoking in restaurants and bars, the new law now addresses public places and worksites.

Under the new law, smoking will no longer be permitted in almost all restaurants, bars and lodging establishments that prepare and serve food and drink. If the business or other place is required to comply with the state's public health laws governing sanitation in food establishments, it will also need to comply with the new prohibition on smoking. There are only three exceptions to these locations: smoking guest rooms in lodging establishments (up to 20% may be designated as smoking), cigar bars, and private clubs.

Cigar bars may allow smoking under certain conditions: the smoke can not migrate into an enclosed area where smoking is otherwise prohibited; the cigar bar must generate at least 60 percent of its revenue from alcohol sales

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and at least 25 percent from cigar sales; it must have a humidor on site; and it must restrict entry to patrons age 21 and over. If the cigar bar begins operation after July 1, 2009, it must be located in a freestanding structure occupied solely by the bar. The cigar bar must submit quarterly revenue reports to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Restaurants and bars cannot designate themselves as private clubs in order to avoid the smoking ban. The new law defines a private clubs as a country club or an organization that maintains selective membership, is operated by the membership, does not provide food or lodging for pay to anyone who is not a member or a member's guest, and is a non-profit corporation. Restaurants and bars, which are not non-profits, do not qualify for the private club exemption.

In addition to the almost 16,000 locations across North Carolina that will become smoke-free as a result of this new law, House Bill 2 also expands local government authority to further regulate smoking in public places. Local governments may regulate in the following areas:

- all unenclosed areas (i.e., grounds) owned, leased, or occupied by local government – including municipal parks.
- public places – defined as “an enclosed area to which the public is invited or in which the public is permitted.” (“enclosed” means an area with a roof and more than 2 walls).

Work is currently in progress to develop the necessary systems to enhance compliance with the new law once it goes into effect in 2010. Grant monies have been awarded from the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights to create educational and promotional materials to be distributed to business owners affected by the new law, to ensure knowledge and compliance statewide. Additionally, these funds will support the creation of a website and use of an “800” number for citizen or employee complaints regarding businesses not in compliance.

Information about the North Carolina Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW) will also be distributed, as tobacco users often make an attempt to quit their habit when their worksite goes smoke-free or when new laws are implemented.

Please visit the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch website regularly (www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov) for any updates or materials pertinent to the implementation of the law. Further information on the law may also be obtained from the University of North Carolina's School of Government website (www.sog.unc.edu/programs/ncphl/SmokingRegulation). ♦

Asthma Events and Expos

Asthma Champion Award

During the 2009 N.C. Asthma Summit, the 3rd Annual Asthma Champion Award was presented to Lisa Johnson. Lisa currently serves as co-chair of the Asthma Alliance of N.C. and is the coordinator of pediatric asthma services for Pitt County Memorial Hospital. This award was created in 2007 to recognize the outstanding efforts of individuals dedicated to improving the lives of those with asthma in North Carolina and was presented to Lisa by Caroline Chappell on behalf of the Summit Planning Committee.

In addition to her roles with the Asthma Alliance of N.C. and Pitt County Memorial Hospital, Lisa has been instrumental in the planning and development of several asthma camps for children and their families in eastern North Carolina, was a volunteer of the year and board member for the American Lung Association of N.C., and assisted with the development of the first telemedicine project in eastern N.C. to monitor children with asthma during the school day, among numerous other accomplishments.

The person who nominated Lisa for this award stated, "Lisa Johnson epitomizes the title of Asthma Champion. I cannot think of a more worthy candidate. I have known Lisa for more



Lisa Johnson, 2009 North Carolina Asthma Champion Award

than 20 years and when I think of asthma, I think of Lisa. She has devoted her life to improving asthma management not just locally but globally."

Congratulations to Lisa on being named the 2009 Asthma Champion! Nomination information for the 2010 N.C. Asthma Champion Award will be available early next year. ♦

Wake County's First Asthma Fair

Wake County Asthma Coalition worked diligently, along with its area partners, to host a successful fair in recognition and celebration of Asthma Awareness Month. More than 150 people attended the 2009 Asthma Fair, which was held May 2 in WakeMed Andrews Conference Center at the WakeMed Raleigh Campus. The focus of the fair was to increase public awareness of asthma in the capital area, stress the importance of understanding this

disease and maintaining lung health, and to offer assistance with self-management skills.

Specific highlights included:

- Josh Green, reporter with NBC-17 News, served as Asthma Champion for this event.
- 34 exhibitors and children's arts and craft activities.

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Trigger House Exhibit, Wake County Asthma Fair

- Educational sessions included What is Asthma?; Asthma Management Tools; and Asthma – Allergies and Environmental Triggers. Classes were provided in both English and Spanish.
- Information was available about current asthma research being conducted at Duke and in the RTP.
- Bus tickets were provided at no charge so individuals could attend who did not have other means of transportation.
- Door prizes were given out during the fair and included a free week at asthma camp (Camp Oakhill in Oxford, N.C.); a bike, helmet and gift card to a bike repair shop; a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner and gift card; a Gift Card Bonanza; and several gift bags. ♦

*Submitted by:
Debbie Credle, Chair, Wake County Asthma Coalition*

Harnett County Asthma Coalition Asthma Expo

On Saturday, May 30, the Harnett County Asthma Coalition held an Asthma Expo. It was an exciting event filled with lots of activities. It was also filled with a lot of hard work!! Several businesses set up display booths that were filled with educational information regarding asthma. Also, we had several asthma games to play that helped the participants learn more about various parts of asthma. For example, the most popular game was Bronchial Burnout. Participants used a water gun to shoot Ping-Pong balls off bottle tops. There were posters at this station that discussed mucous production and inflammation in an asthma attack. We also had games that described asthma action plans, peak flows, asthma medications, lung anatomy, and physiology of asthma. Everyone seemed to enjoy the expo. Members of our coalition even enjoyed the games! To end the event, Neasha Graves from the UNC Environmental Resource Program spoke to everyone about asthma and triggers. She was very enthusiastic as always and everyone complimented her presentation.

Our attendance was smaller than we had hoped for, but we feel that we were able to increase the participants' knowledge of asthma. The expo also proved to help the parents of asthmatics. They were able to walk around and ask any of us questions. Also, the material they were able to pick up at the expo will serve as reference material for them.

Our coalition has discussed this becoming an annual event. It was a lot of fun and we will have to see what happens in 2010! ♦

*Submitted by:
Melissa McLamb,
Harnett County Asthma Coalition*

Art and Asthma



Buster's All Star Artwork, Harnett County Health Department

Recently, some local asthma coalitions have incorporated art into their asthma education and outreach! This has been a unique way to increase awareness in children with asthma and their classmates and friends of the importance of asthma control.

The Cleveland County Asthma Coalition developed an "Art for Asthma" contest that featured five different categories of participation, based on age and grade level. Information about the contest was distributed in physicians' offices and schools across the county and at the YMCA Healthy Kids Day. Contest winners were given savings bonds and recognition ribbons. Winners were also recognized by the Cleveland County Commissioners during their May 1 meeting. Anne Short of the Cleveland County Alliance for Health and the Cleveland County Asthma Coalition was on hand at the Commissioners meeting to proclaim May as Asthma Awareness Month. A local cable channel also promoted the "Art for Asthma" events!

The Harnett County Asthma Coalition sponsored an asthma coloring "contest" for all kindergarten students in the county. The coloring sheets featured Buster the Bunny, a character from the PBS Arthur cartoon series. Buster has asthma, and those who completed the coloring sheets were "Buster's Asthma All Stars." The Harnett County Health Department held an open house in May to display all of the beautiful artwork and to provide education on proper asthma care and management. ♦

Air Quality Forecasts



The Air Quality Flag Program, an initiative that encourages community venues such as schools, government buildings, parks and recreation facilities, child care centers, EMS and fire stations, senior centers, and YMCAs to fly colored flags that correspond with the day's air quality forecast, is quickly becoming one of the most popular asthma-related outreach activities in our state! Whether you are interested in participating in the Air Quality Flag Program or are just concerned with knowing how to plan your outdoor activities based upon the day's air quality, it's a great idea to sign up for your local air quality forecast!

Forecasts are available based upon the following areas in North Carolina: Asheville Ridge Tops, Asheville Valleys, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Hickory, Rocky Mount, Triad, and Triangle. To sign up to receive daily air quality forecast emails, go to www.enviroflash.info, and click on the "Subscribe to EnviroFlash" link and complete the form that appears.

Forecasts are developed daily by staff meteorologists at the N.C. Division of Air Quality.

Additional information about the air quality index and air quality forecasting is available from the N.C. Division of Air Quality's web site, <http://daq.state.nc.us>. A link to this information is also available on the N.C. Asthma Program's web site, www.asthma.ncdohhs.gov. ♦

2009 H1N1 Flu

(formerly Swine Flu)

What do I need to know and do?



SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Seasonal flu vaccine is still important. Do not wait for the H1N1 vaccine to arrive; get your seasonal flu vaccine first!

2009 H1N1 Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a new strain of influenza virus. In June 2009, H1N1 was declared a pandemic – meaning it is everywhere in the world.

Are there medicines to treat H1N1 infection?

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may catch flu by touching something infected and then touching their mouth or nose. A vaccine for H1N1 flu is expected to be available in the coming months.

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines – pills, liquid or an inhaler – that fight flu by keeping the flu viruses from reproducing in your body. They can make your illness milder, make you feel better faster and also prevent serious flu complications. Antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick, usually within two days of developing symptoms.

Who should get priority for the H1N1 vaccination?

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- People between 6 months and 24 years old
- Adults ages 25 through 64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

H1N1 FLU SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Diarrhea
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Cough
- Body aches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting

TIPS TO PREVENT THE FLU

- Get the recommended seasonal flu vaccine when it becomes available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- If you get sick with flu, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from making them sick.
- Get the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available.

For general information about H1N1 in North Carolina, please visit flu.nc.gov.

Send Us Your Stories, and Tell Us What You Think!

The *Asthma Coalition Update* is released quarterly, and we want to share your asthma coalition or work group's activities and stories in future issues. Please let us know what's going on in your communities! We also welcome your feedback and ideas on what you would like to see in future issues. Send news, updates and ideas to Caroline at Caroline.Chappell@ncmail.net. ♦



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
North Carolina Asthma Program

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This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 2U59EH424184-05 from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.