

ASTHMA Initiative *Info*

Winter 2001

A Project of Community HealthWorks



From the Director
Louise Cohen

Welcome to the first issue of "Asthma Initiative Info." Since the Childhood Asthma Initiative began in 1997, a great deal has been accomplished and we are currently in the midst of many exciting projects. We are providing support to community and clinical asthma efforts around the city. We have entered into partnerships with numerous community-based agencies, collaborated with a number of city agencies, sponsored professional continuing education programs, launched a massive public education campaign, and have provided case management to hundreds of children and their families in the Bronx.

This newsletter provides an opportunity to bring you up to date on some of our activities and share in the excitement of asthma successes. I invite you to become collaborators in the effort to insure that kids with asthma can do anything. Please let us know what you think of our newsletter and our projects. To contact us, call the Asthma Action Line at 1-877-ASTHMA-0 [1-877-278-4620]. We look forward to hearing from you!

HUNTS POINT CHILDHOOD HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVE – A MODEL ASTHMA PROGRAM

Three years into the program, it's clear that the Asthma Initiative's pilot program in the South Bronx, the Hunts Point Childhood Health Promotion Initiative, is making a real difference.

In 1997, the Childhood Asthma Initiative formed the Hunts Point Childhood Health Promotion Initiative in an effort to develop a new public health approach to asthma in the Bronx. This approach includes building partnerships among medical providers and social service agencies, helping families by providing asthma case management services, and working in neighborhood schools to improve coordination of care for children with asthma. As a result of its tremendous

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What is the "Public Health Approach" to Asthma?

By Andrew Goodman, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Commissioner, Community HealthWorks, New York City Department of Health

Asthma is a major health problem in New York City. Asthma is the number one cause of children being hospitalized and is probably the leading cause of school absences.

We know a great deal about how to keep children with asthma healthy so that they can play and go to school without coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath. But before 1997, New York City didn't have a comprehensive asthma control program.

In 1997, Community HealthWorks, a new division in the New York City Department of Health, designed and launched the New York City Childhood Asthma Initiative.

Our division was established to support the development of programs that focus on health promotion and prevention, by forging community partnerships, focusing on policy changes as well as direct services, and promoting linkages among

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ASTHMA INITIATIVE FUNDS COMMUNITY ASTHMA PROGRAMS

At the heart of the Asthma Initiative's community focus are five organizations, plus the Department's Hunts Point Childhood Health Promotion Initiative, chosen to develop asthma partnerships. Each organization will receive funding for two years to provide community education, case management, and to develop neighborhood partnerships with other agencies and organizations. These partnerships will develop a local asthma agenda.

For more information, please directly contact these organizations.

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

1368 Fulton Street
Brooklyn, NY 11216
Contact: Astrid Wilkie
Phone: 718-636-6905

East Harlem Community Health Committee

158 East 115th Street, 3rd Fl.
New York, NY 10029
Contact: Emilio Bermis
Phone: 212-360-5980

Health Force

552 Southern Blvd.
Bronx, NY 10455
Contact: Juanita Lopez
Phone: 718-585-8585

Hunts Point Childhood Health Promotion Initiative

1180 Rev. James Polite Avenue
Bronx, NY 10474
Contact : Jacqueline Fox-Pascal or
Florence Chery
Phone: 718-861-5496

Safe Space

(formerly The Center for
Children+ Families)
163-18 Jamaica Avenue, Suite 401
Jamaica, NY 11432
Contact: Audrey Lamadieu
Phone: 718-262-9180

St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Centers of New York

Staten Island Division
75 Vanderbilt Avenue, Room 611
Staten Island, NY 10304
Contact: Cindy Ulanowicz
Phone: 718-354-5460

NEW YORK STATE FUNDS ASTHMA PARTNERSHIPS

In addition, four New York City organizations have received funding from the New York State Department of Health to develop community asthma partnerships.

Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health

450 Clarkson Avenue, Box 1232
Brooklyn, NY 11203
Contact: Amanda Abbey
Phone: 718-270-3101

Northern Brooklyn Health Network

Woodhull Medical Center
760 Broadway
Brooklyn, NY 11206
Contact: Melissa Muñiz
Phone: 718-630-3201

Community Healthcare Network

Queens Center
97-04 Sutphin Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11435
Contact: Komiko Candelario
Phone: 718-657-7088

William F. Ryan Community Health Center

110 West 97th Street
New York, NY 10025
Contact: Celia Gooding
Phone: 212-316-8351

What is the "Public Health Approach" to Asthma?

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health care providers and community partners. We have a multi-disciplinary staff with expertise in community organizing, health planning, program development, epidemiology, and preventive medicine.

The New York City Childhood Asthma Initiative is an excellent example of this integrated prevention approach, where community organizations, government agencies, health care providers and others have joined together to address a health issue that no single organization can successfully address alone.

The approach is straightforward. Effective asthma programs must not only involve individuals and their doctors, but must also include supportive policies and programs in the community. For example, we need community health workers to visit homes and help families to understand their child's asthma medications and when and how to use them. We need to work with families and property owners to reduce asthma triggers in homes, like cockroaches and mold. We need to work with schools to make sure that children have access to their medicine during the school day. We need to work with neighborhood pharmacists to make sure that they stock asthma equipment like spacers and peak flow meters.

To ensure that successes are maintained in the long run, we need to bring everyone together in community partnerships: clinics, schools, community organizations, tenant groups, property owners and others. We must make sure that programs are coordinated, that we can identify problems, and figure out how to fix them.

All of the projects that you will read about in this newsletter are part of an integrated public health approach that we believe will have a great impact on childhood asthma.

HUNTS POINT...

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success, the Hunts Point program became the model for the Asthma Initiative's five newly funded community-based asthma programs.

The Hunts Point staff gives a lot of the credit to its grassroots beginnings. They praise community groups—Hunts Point Awareness, Mothers on the Move, The Point, SEBCO, Pathways to Youth, and La Peninsula Head Start, to name a few, for coming together to create a broad-based community asthma program.

The current core activity of the Hunts Point Initiative staff is case management. Community health outreach workers work closely with families, providing intensive asthma education, help in symptom monitoring and instruction in the use of the Asthma Action Plan. Families are taught how to conduct home assessments to help identify and understand what triggers a child's asthma, and to make sure proper repairs are made. The community health worker may accompany the family on doctor visits to act as an advocate. Other times, the community health worker assists the family in dealing with many of the non-asthma crises they confront, such as coping with a parent's illness or fighting an eviction notice. Often, these problems must be attended to before the family is ready to deal with the child's asthma. Community health workers have been essential for the program's success. Because they live and work in the neighborhood, they are able to establish the trust that is necessary to be an effective educator and to help families make change. Their contact does not end when a case is closed. As integral members of the community, they are able to take advantage of being in the neighborhood to consistently educate family members and to reinforce key asthma messages.



"KIDS WITH ASTHMA CAN DO ANYTHING DAY" 2000

The Hunts Point Initiative also hosts a number of special events to reach out to all community members with a positive message about asthma. The single most important event of the year is the annual "Kids With Asthma Can Do Anything Day," held on October 14, 2000, with over 400 children attending. A coalition of organizations has worked with the Hunts Point staff for the past three years to plan this day of activities and fun, focussing on asthma awareness, asthma management and physical fitness.

The staff at Hunts Point takes great pride in their work. The program director, Jacqueline Fox-Pascal joined the Asthma Initiative staff in 1998. She had previously worked on HIV prevention and community outreach.

Community health workers Yvonne Roman and Wilma Marrero see the difference they have made. "We see a big difference in the kids. They are doing better. The parents know more and the asthma team is working together. It is very rewarding." Secretary Marilyn Climer talks about how much she has learned about childhood asthma since joining the staff. Hunts Point's public health nurse practitioner, Florence Chery, enjoys the

opportunity to interact with the child over time and to be part of the team, which includes the family, their medical provider and the child's teacher. Her personal goals for the coming year are to decrease absences due to asthma and to succeed in convincing more doctors to use Asthma Action Plans and to follow accepted treatment protocols.

One of the greatest thrills for the staff is that Leyda Colón, whose child completed the asthma case management program, has been hired to join the staff. Peer education is an important part of the Hunts Point program. The staff looks forward to building a community network of parents who can serve as resources to families of children with asthma.

KIDS WITH ASTHMA
CAN DO ANYTHING DAY
2000

New York City Asthma Partnership Underway

A new effort is underway to link the many asthma efforts in New York City. The New York City Asthma Partnership, or NYCAP, will bring individuals and organizations together to share information and resources and develop policy initiatives, with the goal of ultimately reversing the asthma epidemic in New York City.

NYCAP aims to promote policies which can assist families with asthma to improve their quality of life, including improving access to state-of-the-art medical care, health insurance, "asthma-friendly" housing, and a clean environment. To be successful, NYCAP intends to involve organizations and individuals representing a wide range of experience and expertise. Over 100 organizations

are already involved, including city agencies, community-based organizations, medical institutions, academic institutions, and local asthma coalitions.

NYCAP's first semi-annual meeting took place on November 1, 2000 with more than 200 people in attendance. At that time, committees were established, focusing on medical care, the environment, schools, data collection, and an organizational committee.

To join NYCAP, or for information about the next meeting and the activities of NYCAP, please contact Anna Caffarelli, Partnership Coordinator, at 212-788-5364, or email her at acaffare@health.nyc.gov.

The New York City Childhood Asthma Initiative

A Project of Community HealthWorks
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New York, New York 10013

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Fax: 212-442-9539
www.nyclink.org/health

Asthma Action Line
877-278-ASTHMA-0 [877-278-4620]

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