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In the News:

NYCAP Members Recipients of World Asthma Day Mini Grant

May 2005 –The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Asthma Initiative awarded ten NYCAP members mini grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to fund World Asthma Day activities.



WORLD ASTHMA DAY 2005™

Funded activities included education and outreach, sports days for children with asthma, asthma events in schools, and daycare centers community-wide.

The following organizations received funding: Arthur Ashe Institute, Urban Health Plan, Asthma Basics for Children Initiative, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, East Harlem Asthma Working Group, Hope Garden Multi-Service Center, Lincoln Hospital, Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, South Bronx Asthma Partnership, Sports Foundation, and Union Settlement.

ABC Holds 2nd Annual World Asthma Day Conference

Jun. 16 – The Northern Manhattan Asthma Basics for Children Initiative (ABC) held its annual health conference, a part of World Asthma Day, in Washington Heights to discuss its asthma intervention in schools, how obesity and mold exacerbate asthma symptoms, and the use of acupuncture as an alternative to manage the respiratory disease.

Sally Findley, Ph.D., director of ABC, described some of the coalition’s intervention activities that focus on reducing asthma in children such as training teachers and other school staff in asthma basics and knowing how to identify potential triggers that can set off a child’s asthma attack. “If the staff and the teachers don’t know about asthma, they won’t be able to help kids [in their schools] who have asthma,” Dr. Findley said.

Other speakers were Benjamin Ortiz, MD of Harlem Hospital Center, Ray Lopez of Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Services, and Cesar A. Armoza, Ph.D, a

EHAWG Marches 3rd Time to Rally against Asthma

Sept. 10 – The East Harlem Asthma Working Group (EHAWG) held its third annual asthma march, *C.A.M.IN.A.R for Asthma*, to highlight the issue of asthma and its collective efforts to reduce asthma disparities in East Harlem.

“The reason for the march is to put a spotlight on how asthma is a major health problem in our community and also to show the human faces that are affected by this respiratory disease,” said Delfina Cruz, the chair of the coalition. She explained that EHAWG adopted the motto *How Low Can We Go* for this year’s event because it emphasized the various works done by the coalition to reduce asthma hospitalizations and emergency room visits. One example is using social workers as asthma counselors to educate parents of children with asthma about environmental triggers and how to communicate with their children’s doctors.

The event was a 2.5-mile trek that started from E. 116th St. between Lexington and Park Ave. and ended at W. 125th St. between Lenox Ave. and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard. Free asthma screenings were also provided for neighborhood residents attending the march.

licensed acupuncturist. Dr. Ortiz explained that some children with asthma may believe that they can’t participate in physical activity and may eventually become overweight or obese due to inactivity. He stated that parents need to encourage kids to be more active in their early lives (i.e. walking) and support physical education programs in their local schools. Lopez explained that individuals can remedy housing-related problems linked to mold by taking steps such as documenting violations in a letter with pictures to present in housing court. Dr. Armoza discussed the use of acupuncture as an alternative method to help individuals with asthma quit smoking, a trigger of asthma.

The second half of the conference focused on asthma awareness posters created by the children of Washington Heights. The drawings conveyed messages such as the avoidance of environmental tobacco smoke and not letting asthma prevent someone from participating in sports.

Words from the Co-Chairs

Greetings fellow NYCAPers! We are pleased to present you with the first issue of our newly resurrected newsletter. Its purpose is to provide information to our members about activities conducted by the partnership as a whole and its member organizations. The newsletter contains some familiar segments such as current news about NYCAP and announcements of upcoming events. A new section has been added to the newsletter to keep you abreast of published news and research articles related to asthma.

NYCAP is committed to encouraging the exchange of information and ideas that will strengthen our collective vision of a city where every person lives in an environment that promotes respiratory health and where people with asthma live full and active lives. As the months progress, we will be bringing attention to current and interesting topics related to asthma and highlighting the work of our committees and members through the newsletter. On behalf of the Steering committee, we say READ AND ENJOY!!!



Lorna E. Davis, M.S.
Co-Chair
NYCAP Steering Committee
Director, NYC Asthma Initiative



Louise Vetter
Co-Chair
NYCAP Steering Committee
CEO, American Lung Association of the City of New York, Inc.

Research, News and Updates Related to Asthma

Back to School May Also Spell Asthma Relapse for Kids

September has traditionally been marked by parents and kids as the end of summer fun and the start of another school year. However the upcoming Fall months should also serve as a reminder to parents and doctors that asthmatic students returning to school may be at risk of having a recurring asthma attack.

September and October represent critical months when hospitals see a spike in emergency room visits and hospital admissions for asthma. Parents of children with asthma can help decrease the risk of setting off their kids' asthma by instructing them on how to reduce being exposed to viral infections. Health professionals should advise parents to teach their children how to limit their exposure to these biological triggers by not touching their noses and mouths unless they properly washed their hands and using disposable tissues when blowing their noses.

To take better care of school-aged children with asthma, health providers, school nurses and physicians, and parents should:

- o ensure that every child with persistent asthma is being managed with preventive medications, preferably inhaled corticosteroid
- o ensure health providers are implementing national treatment guidelines
- o alert one another when a child has frequent unscheduled visits to the school medical room with asthma symptoms or is excessively absent from school
- o complete the "Multi-Use Medication Form", so children can take preventive or rescue asthma medication at school

Kid-Friendly Asthma Device Alleviates Fear of Using Spacer

Pediatricians who incorporate the use of spacers in managing their young patients' asthma may usually encounter a common problem that interferes with doctors' goal of reducing emergency room visits and hospital admissions: poor compliance to using the devices correctly either by children and/or their parents assisting them. Negative emotions associated with using conventional spacers (i.e. fear by kids or stress from parents) may contribute to children's and parents' resistance to utilizing the devices properly. However, an innovative kid-friendly asthma spacer called the "Funhaler" may help pediatricians improve a child and parent's adherence to use a spacer when administering the life-saving asthma medication.

The "Funhaler" is similar to a traditional spacer designed to be used with a metered dose inhaler. Unlike the conventional one, the newer version incorporates an incentive toy (a spinning disk and whistle), which encourages good inhalation technique by users when administering asthma medication. A November 2004 article published in *Respirology* found that groups who used the child-friendly apparatus reported better delivery of the medication into the respiratory system and less negative emotions associated with its use by children and parents as opposed to that of a traditional spacer. Physicians may find the "Funhaler" useful because it is geared towards children and may create a more positive experience using a spacer.

Editor's Note: This segment is NOT an official product endorsement from NYCAP.



Announcements

The American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) will be holding its 7th Annual Community Asthma & COPD Coalitions Symposium Tuesday and Wednesday, November 1-2, 2005, in Montreal, Canada. The event, which is open to members of local asthma coalitions, will feature presentations about ongoing and new education and community projects in the U.S. and Canada. NYCAP will be displaying a poster presentation during this event. The symposium will provide coalition members to network with other American and Canadian coalition members regarding outreach activities, educational programs, control and prevention of environmental asthma triggers, and utilizing community resources. For more information and to register, contact Joyce Bruno, MIPH, at jbruno@chestnet.org.

The Long Island College Hospital in collaboration with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Asthma Training Institute will be hosting a half-day conference, entitled *Successful Asthma Management in the Urban Setting: Acute Asthma, Evaluation, and Treatment*, on Wednesday, November 16, 2005. The event, which is free and held 8am-12:30pm, will discuss the management of pediatric and adult acute asthma in a hospital, emergency room, and physician's office setting. This seminar is approved for 4.5 Continuing Medical Education credits for physicians. Pre-registration is required. To register or find out more information, call 718-780-1215 or send an email message (type "LICH event 11-16-05" in subject box) at kgarrett@chpnet.org.

The Lutheran Family Health Centers (LFHC), a community-based health care system in Brooklyn, has an open full-time position for Asthma Coordinator for its Disease Management Program. The responsibilities of the job include program coordination and planning. Candidates applying should possess a Master's level administrative degree. Experience in grant development and data management is preferred. Applicants should email their inquiries about the position to jflores@lmcmc.com or call Dr. J. Flores, associate medical director of LFHC, at 718-630-8794.

The Department of Community & Preventive Medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine is seeking candidates to fill two intern positions. The internship, which last for three full months, involves working on projects related to the prevalence of childhood asthma in NYC. Interns will have the opportunity to be featured as co-authors in scientific publications and/or present the results of their projects at professional conferences. Those interested in applying should be current students pursuing their Bachelor's or Master's degree or a recent graduate. Required skills include strong knowledge of statistics and excellent scientific writing skills. Candidates chosen for the internship will receive a monthly stipend (approximately \$1,700), full health benefits, and academic credit if applicable. For application detail, email request at luz.claudio@mssm.edu.

Asthma Program Coordinator MPH and strong stats background preferred. Looking for part-time (approx. 20 hours per week; approx. \$20k per year) coordinator for 3-site NIH study using disease management software in underserved pediatric populations from November 2005 through September 30, 2006. Possibility for extension. Travel to sites to work with on-site program coordinators in Queens, Brooklyn and Bronx. Work out of office in financial district. Online monitoring of patient entries and follow-up with noncompliant patients. Coordination of donation of computers from Cristina Foundation. Spanish speaker a plus. Please e-mail resumé to rarnold@pharmacon.com.

A Photo Moment



Sally Findley, Ph.D. (right) posing with two young winners of asthma awareness poster contest.



Residents of East Harlem marching in EHAWG's 3rd annual asthma rally.

The Asthma Initiative Program (AIP) of the Louis Armstrong Center for Music & Medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center is seeking children ages 7-18 with asthma to participate in a research study on the effects of music therapy and wind playing on the breathing and quality of life of children and teens with the respiratory disease. Participants selected for the study will receive a free designer sketchbook diary and a recorder flute. The research is a non-invasive study. If you know a parent who may be interested in enrolling his or her child in this project, contact the AIP Hotline at 212-420-3592.

The Steering Committee of NYCAP would like to welcome Leon Tulton as the managing editor of the coalition's newsletter. Leon obtained his Master's degree in Public Health from Hunter College, previously served as the press secretary of the East Harlem Asthma Working Group and contributed health-related news articles about asthma as a freelance writer to various community and weekly newspapers such as East Harlem Online, NY Amsterdam News, and Village Voice.

New York City Asthma Partnership

www.asthma-nyc.org/nycap

Steering Committee

Co-Chair: Lorna E. Davis, MS
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Co-Chair: Louise Vetter

American Lung Association of the City of New York, Inc.

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For more information or if you would like to become a member of NYCAP contact:

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