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In the News

Making Changes from the Top to Fight Asthma at 2005 Semi-Annual Meeting

Dec. 5, 2005 - The New York City Asthma Partnership (NYCAP) held its semi-annual meeting to discuss how implementing system-level changes can play an important role in the fight against asthma.

Daniel Hyman, MD of New York Presbyterian Hospital explained that all types of organizations are composed of risk takers who are open to new ideas (early adopters) and defenders of the status quo (traditionalists) who are resistant to change. "People adapt to change at different rates," Dr. Hyman said. "The key is to seek out the early adopters who can help make these changes happen."

Paloma Izquierdo-Hernandez, president and CEO of Urban Health Plan (UHP), described how changes were implemented within her organization. Through a Health Disparities Collaborative sponsored by the federal government, UHP has contributed significantly to the decline of asthma hospitalizations among kids in Hunts Point, a Bronx neighborhood. This led UHP to conduct multiple internal performance improvement projects using the Collaborative models.

Edward Fishkin, MD, of Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center & North Brooklyn Health Network, described the creation of an asthma registry by the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation. According to Dr. Fishkin, the registry has several important functions: it monitors patients' health by uniting their clinical information into a single database and it helps to track symptoms, treatment, emergency visits, etc.

Sebastian Bonner, Ph.D of the New York Academy of Medicine and Rosemary Obiapi of Union Settlement Association spoke about a program they developed in day care settings to identify children with asthma and track health service delivery. Union Settlement has been able to use this program to increase the percentage of children with asthma action plans from 28 percent to 89 percent and to increase provider prescriptions of inhaled corticosteroids for children with persistent asthma from two percent to 38 percent.

Patricia Wanieski, RN of the NYS Department of Health explained that the state has partnered with the Center for Health Care Strategies, Medicaid managed care health plans, providers, and community asthma coalitions to develop and implement clinical and administrative practices to improve asthma care for NYS Medicaid beneficiaries. "The real work is to translate this guideline into practice," she said. "If we can accomplish this task, we can make asthma care for our state residents even better."

DOHMH Funds Asthma Project for Daycare

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Asthma Initiative has funded five organizations to work with a total of 90 group daycares, HeadStart, and Pre-K programs to improve systems to identify and coordinate care for children with asthma.

The project, an expansion of the work started by the New York Academy of Medicine and Union Settlement, ensures that daycare staff is trained on asthma, parents and children receive appropriate asthma education, and that centers develop written site-specific plans to address asthma. The program features a computerized health tracking system, EC HealthTrak, which will help centers to uniformly collect information on children's health status, monitor absences related to asthma, and prioritize care coordination. The project is also integrated into the NYCAP Early Childhood committee.

Funded agencies and the neighborhoods that they serve are Child Care Inc. (South Bronx), Long Island College Hospital (Central Brooklyn), Union Settlement (East & Central Harlem). In addition, the NYC Council enhancement funds supported the addition of Queens Comprehensive Perinatal Council (Jamaica & Far Rockaway), Ridgewood/Bushwick Senior Citizens Center-Hope Gardens (Bushwick), and Southeast Queens Clergy for Community Empowerment (Jamaica).

Words from the Co-Chairs

Greetings fellow NYCAPers. Happy New Year to all of our members. As we say hello to 2006, we should remember that our coalition's mission of fighting asthma in New York City did not end in 2005. Although asthma hospitalization rates throughout the city have declined over the past eight years, the struggle to improve the respiratory health of New Yorkers suffering from asthma is on-going. As a speaker at our December 5th semi-annual meeting cautioned, we must not allow feelings of complacency to undo the victories that NYCAP has accomplished.

This year represents new challenges and opportunities for us to continue promoting citywide asthma awareness and developing solutions. Together, we can help make 2006 the year that people with asthma breathe easier.



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

Asthma Intervention Program “Speaks” Community’s Language

In a city where health professionals serve an increasingly diverse population, language continues to be a barrier in achieving good health. Health professionals are now learning to overcome this problem by developing culturally-appropriate health interventions.

In a September 2005 article in *Chest*, the authors Vianessa Tatis et al found that Latino patients enrolled in their asthma intervention program experienced a greater reduction in emergency department (ED) visits (40 percent versus 10 percent) and hospitalizations (36 percent versus zero percent) compared with those who declined to participate. The study revealed that ED visit and hospitalization rates were decreased by using tactics to overcome language barriers such as hiring and training residents as asthma educators and developing culturally-targeted education materials.

City Education Dept. Fights to E.R.A.S.E Asthma in Schools

In two NYC public schools in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, the word “E.R.A.S.E” will soon have a new meaning for students with asthma. The NYC Department of Education, in partnership with the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and several private organizations, announced last December an initiative that will provide free diagnosis and advice on treatment and on-going management of asthma for students during the school day.

The in-school program, called Project E.R.A.S.E (Eradicating Respiratory Asthma to help Students Excel), will send asthma specialists to P.S. 140 and P.S. 142 to create an on-going connection between physicians, educators, school nurses, and parents. Project E.R.A.S.E will conduct monthly meetings with parents, caregivers, and educators, and provide educational information and support to build long-term asthma management skills. For 18 months, student-related data (i.e. school absenteeism and emergency room visits) will be collected and analyzed to gauge the program’s success. If successful, the project may be expanded citywide.

For more information on Project E.R.A.S.E go to www.projecterases.com.

Asthma Gets National Spotlight Through Celebrities

What do a famous entertainer and professional football player have in common? They both have asthma. Actress/Singer Lindsay Lohan was hospitalized in January for an asthma attack and Pittsburgh Steeler Running Back Jerome “The Bus” Bettis appeared in a February 5th Super Bowl commercial to raise asthma awareness. Both celebrities have had asthma since childhood. These two recent occurrences represent an opportunity for health professionals to talk to their clients about asthma and the importance of managing it. Highlighting celebrities who have asthma may encourage patients, especially kids, to learn more about the disease and ways to live with it.

Announcements

Health Plus, a not-for-profit healthcare plan agency, has an open position for Community Outreach Manager. Candidate will be responsible for developing and implementing community outreach programs that support members in understanding and navigating through the healthcare system. Responsibilities also include daily oversight of Community Health Education Associate activities and reports directly to the Associate Director of Health Education & Community Outreach. Applicants must have an undergraduate or graduate degree in health education, social work, nursing, or related field or five years of related experience. Prior health education and/or managed care experience preferred. Applicants must have excellent oral and written skills and be willing to travel to various sites and flex hours to meet departmental needs. Email resumes at cblake@healthplus-ny.org with the phrase "Applying for Community Outreach Manager Position" typed in the subject box.

North Brooklyn Health Network is seeking candidates to fill its open Community Asthma Project Coordinator position. Primary responsibilities include coordinating a progressive asthma education and management program in North Brooklyn schools, participating as a health educator in the program, organizing and guiding the activities of a multi-organizational asthma coalition, and reporting directly to the North Brooklyn Health Network medical director. Applicants must be a nurse, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner and/or possess a Master's Degree in Public Health, Health Education, or related field or at least 3 years practical community health/outreach experience working with children, parents, and other adults. Qualifications for this position include a strong interest and experience with asthma, ability to collect and analyze data and produce meaningful progress reports, strong verbal and written skills, and knowledge of word processing, spreadsheet, and database programs. Bilingual in Spanish and English strongly preferred. CVs should be emailed to Rekha Viswanathan at Rekha.Viswanathan@woodhullhc.nychhc.org.

The Department of Emergency Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center is searching for candidates to fill three part-time Research Assistant (RA) positions to enroll patients in an upcoming asthma research study. Primary duties are collecting data on asthma patients in the adult and pediatric emergency departments as patients are being treated. RAs will also review and abstract data from electronic medical records regarding outcomes for enrolled patients. Candidates applying must have excellent interpersonal and computer skills. Proficiency with Excel, Palm, or Windows CE PDAs, or medical/health care background preferred. Email CV to Bret Nelson, MD at bret.nelson@mountsinai.org.

Vernon Avenue Children's School, a Brooklyn-based nursery and pre-school program, has open positions for an Educational Supervisor/Disabilities Manager and Early Childhood Head Teacher. Candidates applying for the Educational Supervisor/Disabilities Manager must possess Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, be NYS certified, and bilingual (Spanish) and experience with Head Start and Special Needs a plus. Applicants for Early Childhood Head Teacher must have Bachelor's degree and classroom experience and fluency in Spanish preferred. Send resumes for both open positions to Lisa Klein at lklein@metrochild.org or call 718-455-1800 ext. 13 for more information.

A Photo Moment



Louise Vetter welcomes members to NYCAP's December 5th Semi-Annual Meeting



Lorna E. Davis (right) and Rebecca Kalin participating in November 12th South Bronx Environmental Health & Policy Forum



Members of NYCAP's Early Childhood Committee discussing agenda January 5, 2006

NYCAP member Dr. Paul Ehrlich was featured in a news story that was broadcasted on WCBS-TV and WCBS News Radio 88 on December 1, 2005. The story highlighted his involvement in Project E.R.A.S.E, a pilot program that will provide free diagnosis and advice on treatment of asthma for children at two Lower East Side Schools.

New York City Asthma Partnership

www.asthma-nyc.org/nycap

Steering Committee

Co-Chair: Lorna E. Davis, MS
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Co-Chair: Louise Vetter
American Lung Association of the City of New York, Inc.

Communications Committee

Co-Chair: Kathy Garrett-Szymanski
Long Island College Hospital

Community Asthma Education Committee

Co-Chair: Marcy Lopez, AE-C
Columbia University School of Public Health

Co-Chair: Sebastian Bonner, PhD
New York Academy of Medicine

Data and Research Committee

Chair: Robert Silverman, MD
Long Island Jewish Medical Center
Department of Emergency Medicine

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Co-Chair: Juan Correa, MD, MPH
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For a Better Bronx

Health Care Delivery

Chair: Vacant

Schools Committee

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NYC Department of Education

Co-Chair: Jeanette Stingone, MPH
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NYCAP Newsletter

Leon Tulton, MPH
Editor & Writer

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The NYCAP website has a new address!

www.nycapnyc.org

Please see the website for partnership information, upcoming events, presentations and more...

To publish announcements in the NYCAP newsletter, please email Leon Tulton at ltulton@health.nyc.gov



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