



# Breathing Better in Ohio

Asthma Program Newsletter, Ohio Department of Health

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*This issue of Breathing Better in Ohio is different from the ones preceding it. First, it is formatted differently. Second, some people around the state have contributed short articles about their activities. That will be some of the focus of the newsletter in the future, so please think about reporting on your program activities for future newsletters.*

## ODH Asthma Program News

As many of you know, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Asthma Program is small; currently an asthma coordinator, Barbara Hickcox, R.N., M.S., and an asthma epidemiologist, Cynthia Weiss, M.A. and the program supervisor, Mandy Burkett, M.A. The team attempts to use data about asthma to determine where to focus resources. Staff resources are directed toward maintaining and enhancing the Ohio Surveillance System for Asthma (OSSA), developing partnerships to leverage resources (through Ohio Asthma Coalition) and implementing and facilitating implementation of population-based interventions to decrease the burden of asthma on citizens of Ohio.

Building partnerships to enhance what can be done to reduce the burden of asthma is a primary goal of the program and staff support of the Ohio Asthma Coalition (OAC) is one way the Asthma Program works toward this goal. The OAC is a group of nearly 200 individuals and organizations that works to improve the

lives of people with asthma. This is done through broad activities that assist local coalitions and organizations manage asthma in their communities more effectively than they could without these tools. An example of this kind of activity is the asthma conference held August 1, discussed below. Another project just starting with the coalition is the design of a home-visit product that local coalitions and agencies can use to improve asthma self-management, reduce costs of asthma care and market to health plans for reimbursement.

A major OAC undertaking in the next year will be the evaluation and revision of the Ohio Statewide Asthma Plan and the ODH Asthma Program will be an integral part of that effort. Staff works closely with Belinda Huffman, the current chair of OAC and Glen Needham, the chair-elect who will take office at the annual meeting of the coalition on March 6, 2009, and the rest of the OAC steering committee. The steering committee has begun the process of evaluation through a survey of the

OAC membership and outside stakeholders and reports from all the committees of the coalition. Another large step in this process is to restructure the coalition into more project focused activities which may increase efficiency of coalition activity. The steering committee has moved forward with a plan for restructuring OAC and it will be presented for a vote at the March 6, 2009, annual meeting.

ODH's Asthma Program will also focus on developing asthma activity in the Southeastern region of the state to address the burden of asthma. We will be looking for partners in this initiative, so let us know if you would like to participate.

**Health Plan Collaborative:** Ohio Surveillance System for Asthma (OSSA) data tell us that Ohio falls above U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Healthy People 2010* rates in hospitalizations and emergency department visits for asthma. Although many organizations throughout

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## Program News

Ohio strive to deliver high quality asthma care, hospitalizations and emergency department visits are not decreasing. The ODH Asthma Program is taking the lead on bringing health plans together to identify ways to reduce emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to asthma. Many of these visits are preventable and a decrease will improve quality of life for people with asthma and will reduce the cost of asthma care. The collaborative will look at ways to identify patients at high risk for adverse outcomes from asthma, options for interventions and will develop a plan to implement identified interventions within Ohio with these high risk populations.

This collaborative has been placed on the ODH Strategic Plan for 2008-2009 and will be a priority for the program. A small group has met to make preliminary plans. The asthma coordinator also met with the medical directors of Ohio health plans to tell them about the project, solicit their ideas on how to reduce morbidity from asthma and engaged their participation in the program.

Dr. Alvin D. Jackson, director of the ODH, will be inviting health plans to commit to participation in the collaborative.

### Appalachian Ohio

**Asthma Project:** The childhood asthma prevalence rate in the 29 Appalachian counties of Ohio is significantly higher than the state rate for children. During spring and summer of 2008, a College Intern with the Asthma Program, worked with staff to identify asthma needs in the 29 counties forming Appalachian Ohio. The Intern telephoned or met with nearly a 100 individuals in local health departments, local health services, community agencies and academic institutions during a three month period.

Just as the ODH Asthma Program identified childhood asthma prevalence rates in these counties as the highest in the state, the individuals contacted indicated a need to learn more about asthma, interventions and access to asthma information. These contacts also indicated their time is limited to provide asthma-only services, but they have people with asthma they would like to help and need ideas and resources with which to do that. The Asthma Program will

follow several recommendations that came from the survey to reach this population including webinars, teleconferences and e-mails. We will divide the 29 counties into three groups to work together for easier communications with all the counties.

### Healthful Homes/Healthful Schools Grant:

In June 2007, the ODH Asthma Program was awarded a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to fund the Northwest Ohio Asthma Coalition and the Greater Cleveland Asthma Coalition for environmental asthma interventions in disadvantaged schools. The implementation of these projects is just now starting for the 2008-2009 school year. Both coalitions will begin doing their school interventions that will include the use of USEPA's Tools for Schools Action Kit and the Healthy School Environmental Assessment Tool (Healthy SEAT), among other interventions. We are hoping that they will have valuable lessons learned to share when we work toward development and implementation of a school asthma management tool this year (2009).



## Ohio Asthma Education/ Research Conference

### Ohio Asthma Education/Research

**Conference:** On Friday, Aug. 1, the OAC held the long-awaited follow up to its 2006 conference with the support of the Ohio



Left to right: John Mastronarde, M.D., Director, Asthma Center, OSU, Belinda Huffman, Chair, and William J. Martin, III, M.D., NIEHS.

State University (OSU) Asthma Center and the OSU Center for Continuing Medical Education (CCME). Held at the Blackwell Center on the OSU campus, the conference hosted physicians, nurses, environmental specialists, respiratory therapists and others. The day was divided into an education session in the morning and a research session in the afternoon. Amy Chuang, M.D., Cleveland Clinic Foundation kicked off the morning with a very informative presentation on the 2007 National Institutes of Health, *Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma*, giving it historical perspective listeners

found very useful. Breakout sessions were well-attended by the nearly 100-member audience. In the afternoon, the keynote speaker, William Martin, III, M.D., Director of Translational Research, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, discussed his activities in the response to Hurricane Katrina aboard the U.S.S. Hope. His on-site slides and very specific information gave everyone a real sense for the devastation of the hurricane and how health care was delivered in such an emergency.

The rest of the afternoon was filled with brief presentations by researchers from many different asthma perspectives around Ohio: reflux disease, exercise, air pollution, diesel exhaust, gender and the OAC Chair-elect, Glen Needham, presenting his dust mite and bed bug research. The last presentation came complete with bugs in a bottle to pass around. To complement all these presentations, poster sessions highlighted even more Ohio asthma research. Universities from across the state were well represented.

A big thank you goes to the planning committee: Joan Keith, chair; Sereana Dresbach, OSU CCME; John Mastronarde, M.D., Molly Fontana, Cathy Benninger from the OSU Asthma Center; Ann Connelly, Belinda Huffman, Glen Needham, Wanda Dillard, Shalini Forbis, Cynthia Weiss, Barbara Hickcox, Laurel Talabere, Phyllis Scheiderer, Joe Storin, Yvonne Adair and Helen Spencer. Thanks also goes to all the speakers: Amy Chuang, M.D.; John Mastronarde, M.D.; Sumita Khatri, M.D., M.S.; Lori Kondas, R.R.T.; Zerrine Bailey, R.N.; Emily Lee, M.Ed., CHES; Barbara Rushley, R.R.T.; Patrick Ryan, Ph.D.; Glen Needham, Ph.D.; Laurel Talabere, R.N., Ph.D.; Elizabeth Allen, M.D.; and Jonathan Parsons, M.D. Thanks to all the individuals and programs that presented poster sessions, too.



Shalini Forbis, M.D., MPH

## The Indoor Environments Section at ODH also includes

### Ohio's Smoke Free Workplace Program:

Ohio's Smoke Free Workplace Program is housed within the Indoor Environments Section and is responsible for enforcement of the law.



The program lost its full-time staff person to the Recreation Program here at ODH (congratulations on a promotion for Mary Clifton). Recently, ODH was able to

offer contracts for local health departments to help them cover some of the costs of enforcement. Remaining program staff is attempting to provide ongoing technical assistance to local designees and to businesses, maintain and build the Web-based application and conduct enforcement in the 35 areas for which ODH maintains designation of enforcement authority. A recent survey of local designees indicates they believe most businesses in their area are complying with the law.

### School Environmental Health Program

**Update:** In December 2005, Gov. Bob Taft signed into legislation Jarod's Law, drafted in response to a tragic accident that claimed the life of a southwestern Ohio elementary student. The rules associated with the law went into effect in September 2007, and they require local health departments to inspect every school building within their jurisdiction annually.

The School Environmental Health Program (SEHP) in the Indoor Environments Section is busy assisting schools and local health departments with implementation of Jarod's Law. This is the second year of

implementation of this law and while it can be complicated and sometimes difficult, many health departments and schools are doing a great job! As with any new rule package, there are a few things that need to be fixed in the rule. The SEHP has drafted some proposed rule revisions with an advisory board, and these should soon be available on the ODH Web-site for public comment. SEHP has also been busy with two sets of regional trainings (10 events) during the past several months, distributing more information on the rules related to chemical hygiene plans, roof inspection, asbestos management, radon testing and playground safety.



## OAC and Local coalitions

**Central Ohio Asthma Coalition Update:** The Central Ohio Asthma Coalition (COAC) has recently printed a guide to *Asthma Resources in and Around Central Ohio*. The guide lists medical and educational program and supportive services, smoking cessation Services, and physician referral lines. The counties included in the guide include Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway and Union. Coalition members have been actively supporting the American Lung Association's Asthma Walk, promoting asthma friendly and healthy living environments and providing asthma education and support in Central Ohio. Contact Phillip Bouton at (614) 645-6226 or [pbouton@columbus.gov](mailto:pbouton@columbus.gov) for more information.

### **Greater Cleveland Asthma Coalition**

**Update:** The Greater Cleveland Asthma Coalition (GCAC) has been busy with its partnerships on several initiatives. As a partner with the *Steps to a Healthier Cleveland* program with the Cleveland Department of Public Health, GCAC provides

education for health-care professionals, including an asthma management webinar series, asthma toolkits for primary care providers and education related to CFC-free inhaler changes. GCAC also continues to work with Case Western Reserve University's School of Nursing and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) to provide Open Airways for Schools, an asthma management program for children. In addition to the Steps program, GCAC provides asthma education to child-care providers and families involved in the Cuyahoga County Healthy Homes Initiative. GCAC also recently completed and distributed asthma manuals to all CMSD school buildings, which outline district asthma policies and management steps for all school personnel.

Through committee work, GCAC is in the beginning stages of planning an in-home asthma management program to provide comprehensive asthma education and effective environmental remediation to asthmatics in the community. It is the coalition's hope this type

of program will be reimbursed from third-party payers in the future. Because these efforts encompass much of the work the environmental committee has done in the past, the environment committee now focuses its attention on outdoor environment and is working toward community education and advocacy projects on anti-idling. This focus will allow several committees to work together, as well as provide a platform for GCAC to create new partnerships with other community organizations dedicated to environmental education as it relates to health. For further information contact Lisa Camardo or Emily Lee at the American Lung Association of Midland States, Northeast Ohio at (216) 524-5864 or by email at [lcamardo@ohiolung.org](mailto:lcamardo@ohiolung.org) or [elee@ohiolung.org](mailto:elee@ohiolung.org).

### **Northwest Ohio Asthma Coalition Update:**

We are preparing for the unveiling of the Ohio Childhood Asthma Awareness campaign in the eighteen northwest Ohio counties served by the coalition. The Goldfish Campaign is a product of the Ad Council

and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition to print ads and public service announcements partnerships with local media will help to spotlight asthma in the Toledo area.

NWOAC recently adopted by-laws, and elected Julie Majo, of St. Vincent Mercy Children's Hospital as chair. We have also decided to undertake a strategic planning process. We are doing an asthma-focused needs assessment in 18 counties of northwest Ohio and are dovetailing this with new member recruitment in these same counties. The plan is to complete the secondary data collection and key informant surveys and to prepare a summary report by Jan. 1, 2009. The Jan. 9, 2009 NWOAC meeting will be a planning retreat to develop a new strategic plan. For more information contact Julie Majo at St. Vincent Mercy Children's Hospital at (419) 251-8014 or by e-mail [Julie\\_Majo@mhsnr.org](mailto:Julie_Majo@mhsnr.org).

**Miami Valley Area Asthma Coalition (MVAAC) Update:** After a hiatus of several years, the MVAAC has begun to meet again under the leadership of Roberta Taylor who is a program director at Premier

Community Health, a community outreach arm of Good Samaritan Hospital in Dayton. In this role, Taylor provides support for the coalition and attracts people back to the coalition. Several OAC members are members of the group, and they will be pulling in more people as they move forward. They had a booth at the Oct. 11, Huber Heights Health

Fair. The booth was staffed by Karen Florkey of CareSource in Dayton and more than 150 people attended the event. Karen distributed materials on adult and childhood asthma and answered questions. Look for more activities as the coalition grows. For more information contact Roberta Taylor at (937) 227-9420 or email at [taylor@pch-dayton.org](mailto:taylor@pch-dayton.org).

## NEWS



**Columbus Public Health** (the City of Columbus Health Department) will be awarded an \$875,000 Healthy Homes Demonstration Grant for three years. Only four demonstration grants were provided this year, with two going to organizations in Michigan and one in Colorado. The Columbus Public Health, Healthy Homes Program will address housing-based health hazards and provide resident education in 220 households. Asthma is the primary factor addressed. We will be conducting home environmental and behavioral assessments, education, follow-up visits, integrated pest management, provision of intervention supplies (encasings, vacuum, cleaning supplies, etc) home repairs, and mold remediation for asthma and injury prevention. We are also doing primary prevention (education) for lead poisoning. The interventions are expected to improve asthma symptoms and reduce the risk of lead poisoning and unintentional injuries. Contact: Phillip Bouton, (614) 645-9226.

**National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Managing Asthma Triggers:** OAC member, Joan Keith, school nurse in Upper Arlington, attended the NASN training in asthma trigger management and will become a trainer in this activity for school nurses. For more information about the program see the NASN Web site at: <http://www.nasn.org/>. To contact Joan Keith about the program, e-mail her at: [jkeith@uaschools.org](mailto:jkeith@uaschools.org).

## Ohio Asthma Coalition Chair Report - Belinda Huffman

Since becoming the chair of the coalition in March, my major goal has been to build on the strategic planning started by Wanda Dillard. The steering committee held a retreat in Aug. 2008 to make specific plans based on the five goals developed the year before: 1. More member involvement; 2. Financial stability for OAC; 3. Develop statewide standards for asthma; 4. A well attended asthma legislative caucus; 5. Cohesion between local asthma coalitions and OAC.

The steering committee discussed the results of the survey sent to the coalition in July. We found the results were directly related with the five goals already developed. One of the strong directives from the survey was the need to reorganize the coalition to have more project-based committees and be a resource to meet the needs of local asthma groups and organizations. The steer-

ing committee considered how to address the results and achieve these goals along with evaluating and rewriting the next five-year Ohio Statewide Asthma Plan. Three action plans were begun during the retreat to address the survey results and reorganization of the coalition:

1. What must be completed in the current plan and what kind of leadership needs to take place from the committees and steering committee by Aug. 2009?
2. What sort of process will we have during the next year to evaluate and revise the statewide asthma plan for 2009-2014 by Aug. 2009?
3. In what ways does the structure of the coalition need to be changed and how will it be accomplished for a vote of the coalition at the annual meeting in March 2009?

The steering committee completed the action plans and shared them with the coalition at the Dec. 5, 2008, meeting. Changes to bylaws and the structure will be voted on at the March 6 meeting. Please look for the first reading in your email.



I want to congratulate and thank the Conference Planning Committee for an excellent conference on Aug. 1, 2008. The speakers covered a wide number of topics and presented impressive research and projects being done in Ohio. I also want to thank the OSU Asthma Center and the Center for Continuing Medical Education for their contributions to this conference. We look forward to future collaborations. Contact Belinda Huffman at [HuffmanB@childrensdayton.org](mailto:HuffmanB@childrensdayton.org).



## New School Asthma Education

The American Lung Association® (ALA) of the Midland States, formed in mid-2007 by the ALAs of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, has developed a basic school asthma education program for all school staff. *Asthma 1-2-3* will provide basic asthma information that can be used by teaching, administrative, coaching and maintenance staff. This was the first project the four states completed together and the content was reviewed by the Northwest Ohio Asthma Coalition, the Greater Cleveland Asthma Coalition and their school partners and knowledgeable asthma providers in Cincinnati and the greater

Louisville, Kentucky and Nashville, Tennessee.

The program attempts to answer the questions:

- Could you recognize the early warning signs of an asthma emergency?
- Do your staff and volunteers know what to do in an asthma emergency?
- Does your school have an asthma policy?

Health care professionals will receive four hours of training in facilitating courses for school personnel.

Certification is available to all health educators, nurses or respiratory therapists with advanced training\* in asthma education. \*Certified asthma

*educators or completed ALA Asthma Educator Institute, the MSRC Asthma Information Review course, or the CDC National Asthma Training Curriculum."*

As part of the training, facilitators will be taught how to provide outcome information to track the scope and effectiveness of the program. Each facilitator will receive a facilitator manual and flash drive with the manual in electronic form. The first facilitator training will take place during the first quarter of 2009. Please refer to the American Lung Association of Ohio's website, [www.ohiolung.org/workshops.htm](http://www.ohiolung.org/workshops.htm) for more information.

*This newsletter is a product of the Ohio Department of Health Asthma Program. The program strives to reduce the burden of asthma by building collaborative efforts to create asthma tools, providing asthma surveillance and by building awareness of asthma issues.*

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