

Region II Asthma News

The Region II Asthma Coalition of CT is committed to the education and prevention of asthma in individuals and families living in Region II



Harmful Cleaners: In the Hall of Shame, or in your Hall Closet?

The Environmental Working Group is expected to release their first edition of the EWG Cleaners Database in the fall of 2012. In anticipation of this interactive database, the organization released a document, titled "EWG Cleaners Hall of Shame", as a preview of the worst of what their research has uncovered so far. The EWG has identified products containing extremely toxic chemicals banned in some countries; products with chemicals known to cause cancer, blindness, asthma and other serious health conditions; and has exposed products that have been "greenwashed" -Don't be fooled by these products that claim to be "environmentally-friendly" alternatives, as they too contain undisclosed, hazardous ingredients. The "Hall of Shame" publication provides EWG Green Tips to help you make informed choices when purchasing these consumer products. *Continued on next page...*

Did you know?

Asthma Rates Escalate to All-time High

In 2010, an estimated one in every 12 Americans had asthma. This included 18.7 million adults and 7 million children. The prevalence of asthma among Americans increased by over 1% from 7.3% in 2001 to 8.4% in 2010, which is the highest recorded level to date according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The results of the most recent Asthma Call-Back Survey, a detailed questionnaire administered to people identified as having asthma through the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, was organized into a recently released report, "Asthma's Impact on the Nation". Do you know some of the statistics found in this report? Check out the infographic on page 3 to test your knowledge. Original article: "U.S. asthma rates at all-time high, CDC says", by Thomas H. Maugh II. Published May 15, 2012 on latimes.com

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Special Asthma Awareness Month Edition



Hall of Shame...

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Some products identified as containing asthmagens, or ingredients that cause asthma, include: Clorox, Fantastik, Febreze, Formula 409, Easy-Off, Lysol, Mr. Clean and Spic and Span. Most disinfecting sprays and air fresheners contain asthmagens and should be avoided. Products that list the following ingredients on their labels should not be used: ethanalamines (MEA, DEA, TEA), "quats", ADBAC, benzalkonium chloride, and "-monium chloride".



The EWG released this information before the debut of their full database because it felt that Americans needed to know this information now. The household cleaning product industry is largely unregulated by the government, so independent scientists from the EWG are trying to provide facts and fill this information gap. For more information and the full report visit <http://ewg.org/cleaners/hallofshame/>.

Calendar of Events

Influenza & Pneumococcal Coalition Annual Meeting

FLU 2012 – The Changing Face of Immunization

September 20, 2012, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

The Woodwinds in Branford, CT

Welcoming remarks by Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA

Contact Eileen Kehl from the CT Association of Directors of Health at ekehl@cadh.org for more information.

Public Hearing on the Proposed Renewal of the Air Permit for Trash to Energy Facility

August 2, 2012, 6:15 PM

State DEEP, Phoenix Auditorium (5th Floor)

79 Elm Street Hartford

Connecticut Pulmonary Section Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions

October 10, 2012

The Woodwinds in Branford, CT

"The CPS meeting (formerly CTS) is held each year in the fall for all health care professionals interested in respiratory disease, critical care and sleep medicine. The educational presentations provide attendees with the opportunity to learn about new developments and significant issues which affect the care of patients with respiratory disease." For more information visit

<http://www.lung.org/associations/charters/northeast/programs/msb/cps/cps2012-annual-meeting.html>

2012 Annual Meeting and Conference of the Connecticut Public Health Association

October 5, 2012, 8:00 AM- 4:30 PM

The Four Points Sheraton in Meridan, CT

275 Research Parkway

The keynote speakers for the conference are Jeffrey Levi, PhD, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health and Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner of the CT Dept. of Public Health. Breakout session topics include: public health informatics, public health & primary care, social media & e-communication, cultural competency, grant writing and much more! For more details visit <http://www.cpha.info/>.



**Connecticut
Public Health
Association**

Promoting Public Health in Connecticut Since 1916

Asthma Awareness Month Interview with Paul Garbe, DVM, MPH, Director of the CDC National Asthma Control Program

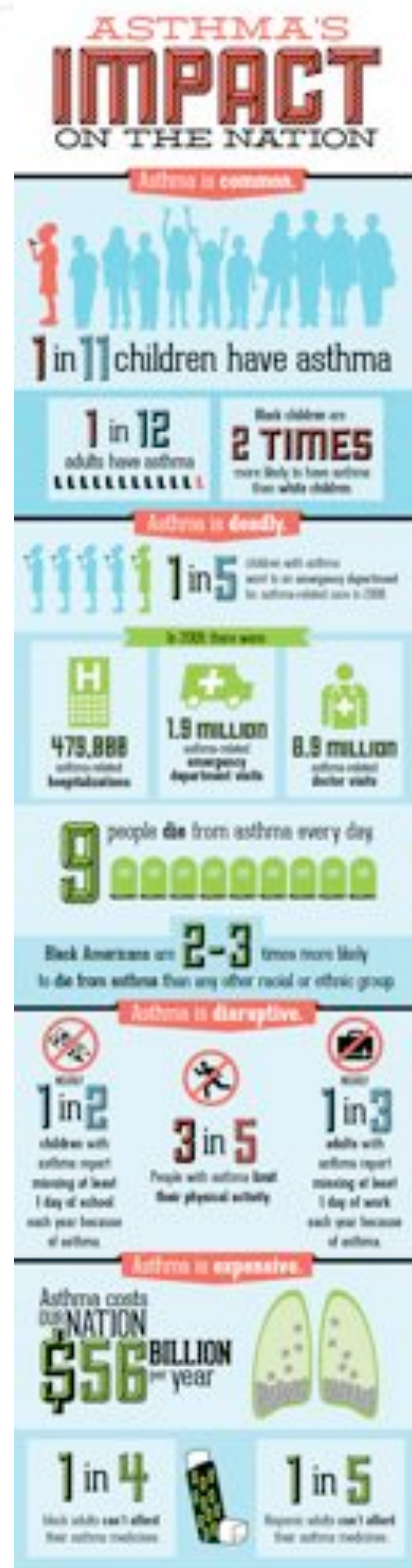
In celebration of Asthma Awareness Month, the Public Health Newswire blog posted an interview with Paul Garbe, DVM, MPH, director of the CDC National Asthma Control Program. In the interview, Garbe talks about the increased burden of asthma on the nation; the importance of surveillance, evaluated interventions, and collaborations with health departments; health disparities; and the importance of environmental protections. Read the full interview, titled “Asthma Awareness Month Q&A with CDC’s Paul Garbe” on the Public Health Newswire blog at

<http://www.publichealthnewswire.org/?p=3352>.

The Federal Government Gets its Own Asthma Action Plan

Asthma Awareness Month ended on a high note with the release of the “Coordinated Federal Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Asthma Disparities” on May 31st. The action plan, overseen by the Asthma Disparities Working Group, outlines steps to: “Reduce barriers to the implementation of guidelines-based asthma management; enhance capacity to deliver integrated, comprehensive asthma care to children in communities with racial and ethnic asthma disparities; improve capacity to identify the children most impacted by asthma disparities; and accelerate efforts to identify and test interventions that may prevent the onset of asthma among ethnic and racial minority children”. Many different voices were represented at the presentation of the plan in Washington, D.C. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, among others, advocated for different actions to take in response to the challenges of controlling this complex, chronic respiratory disease. Summing up the plan well, Secretary Sebelius stated, “What works best is an all-of-the-above approach...by taking action together, we can make a huge difference”

Coverage of this news can be found on the Public Health Newswire blog at, <http://www.publichealthnewswire.org/?p=3775>.



View this infographic online at http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/impacts_nation/default.htm



World Asthma Day Recap

What's a better way to kick off Asthma Awareness Month than with a celebration of World Asthma Day? On May 1, 2012 the Region II Asthma Coalition and the Central CT Health District hosted a Legislative Breakfast at the Legislative Office Building. This event helped raise awareness about the burden of asthma in the state, gain support for the CT Asthma Advisory Council's consensus statement regarding reimbursement and the primary medical home model, as well as frame this chronic disease within the current discussion of healthcare reform. The topics of discussion at the Legislative Breakfast demonstrated how healthcare reform initiatives could help make the 2012 World Asthma Day Theme, "You Can Control Your Asthma", a reality for CT residents with asthma. Each speaker at the event contributed compelling thoughts regarding how to improve asthma care in the state.

The six speakers at the Legislative Breakfast covered a range of important topics. Opening remarks were made by Renee Coleman-Mitchell, MPH, the Section Chief for the Health Education, Management and Surveillance Section at the Department of Public Health. Ms. Coleman-Mitchell relayed personal stories about her mother's experiences with asthma attacks, which emphasized the importance of prevention through patient education. She stated, "The time is now to take this momentum, regroup, and move forward".

Next Michael Corjulo, APRN, the ACES Health Services Coordinator and co-chair of the CT Asthma Advisory Council, commented on asthma education reimbursement. Mr. Corjulo explained that patient education and managed care "needs to be woven into the fabric of the healthcare system". Partly due to a disconnect between science and healthcare, patient education is not valued as highly as it should and, according to Mr. Corjulo, needs to be a bigger part of the "reimbursement pie", so that asthma educators can be compensated for their essential services.

Teresa Frankhauser, a respiratory therapist and parent of a child with asthma, followed with a story of how her frustrations with not being able to manage her son's asthma inspired her to educate herself and become a respiratory therapist. Mrs. Frankhauser is passionate about educating and empowering parents to manage their child's asthma. Echoing Ms. Coleman-Mitchell's call for improved patient education, Mrs. Frankhauser advocated avoiding waiting until a child arrives at the emergency department to teach parents about how to control their child's asthma symptoms. Rather, parents must be educated about how to prevent asthma attacks, remove asthma triggers from the home, and adhere to their prescribed treatment plan. This approach to chronic disease management aligns with best practice guidelines, which Mrs. Frankhauser also supports.

The Legislative Breakfast wouldn't be complete without remarks from a state legislator. Representative Michelle Cook, a democrat serving the 65th district and a member of the Aging, Education, Human Services, and Medicare Managed Care Committees, took the floor to relay information about Primary Care Medical Homes (PCMHs). Given that PCMHs provide comprehensive care for chronic conditions and improve communication between patients and their providers, PCMHs are very important to asthmatic populations. Representative Cook welcomes residents to contact her with any questions, concerns or recommendations regarding PCMHs.

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WAD Recap, continued from previous page...

Sticking to the topic of PCMHs, Dr. Mark Shaefer, Ph.D, who serves as the current Director of Medical Care Administration for the CT Department of Social Services, explained how asthma management is used as a metric for the outcomes and efficacy of PCMHs. By being sensitive to health outcomes of the PCMH, methods can be fine tuned to optimize care for patients of all races and ages. Dr. Shaefer framed his talk around the three Rs of Recognizing issues and needs, Reorganizing healthcare delivery, and Rewarding physicians and caregivers for supporting PCMHs.

The Legislative Breakfast was wrapped up by Dr. Michelle Cloutier, MD, Director of the Asthma Center at CT Children's Medical Center and creator of the Easy Breathing© asthma management program. Dr. Cloutier stumped the audience with questions about the facts and stats quoted by previous speakers to emphasize how challenging it can be to remember medical information and instructions. This exercise highlighted the importance of Asthma Treatment Plans. Dr. Cloutier pointed out how calling an Asthma Treatment Plan an Asthma Action Plan could cause confusion in caregivers. Additionally, all caregivers should have a copy of the Asthma Treatment Plan in order to form an asthma management team and increase medication adherence. She continued, an Asthma Treatment Plan is "only as good as a parent understands" and management is "only as good as the therapy". Recognizing this, Dr. Cloutier has developed the Easy


Breathing Program©, which guides providers in diagnosing, treating, and managing asthma in children and adults.

The Legislative Breakfast was followed by an asthma program vendor session, which lined the Concourse of the Legislative Office Building. Given this event occurred during the final days of the legislative session, many legislators had the opportunity to walk through and learn more about asthma. These events were a great way to raise awareness about asthma. We look forward to celebrating World Asthma Day again next year!



Dr. Cloutier concludes the WAD Legislative Breakfast

Putting on Airs Gets on the Air


On June 14th an interview with Certified Asthma Educators Michael Corjulo, APRN, CPNP, AE-C Health Services Coordinator, ACES CT Asthma Advisory Council co-chair, and Mary Buckley-Davis, RRT, NPS, AE-C, Senior Program Coordinator, was aired on WILI 1400 AM. This dynamic duo talked about asthma and World Asthma Day on the Wayne Norman Show. Missed the broadcast of the interview? Download the radio segment at http://www.wili-am.com/wp_bows.htm. 



Michael and Mary behind the microphone...

Asthma-Associated Chemicals in Consumer Products



An article in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, called “Endocrine Disruptors and Asthma-Associated Chemicals in Consumer Products”, exposes the harmful chemicals companies are hiding in their products and failing to list on their labels. Motivated by the concern that endocrine disruptors and chemicals are accumulating in our bodies and indoor environments, the researchers tested over 200 commercial products to quantify the level of endocrine disruptors and asthma-triggering chemicals in common consumer products. A variety of cosmetics, personal care products, cleaners, sunscreens, and vinyl products were analyzed, including both popular brands and alternative products. The researchers detected 55 compounds, with the highest concentrations and numbers of compounds found in fragranced products, like perfumes, air fresheners, dryer sheets, and sunscreen. Fragrances were found to be particularly harmful as they can initiate secondary chemical reactions in the air to produce additional airborne contaminants. The results raise concerns about the potential harmful effects of the interaction of multiple chemicals within consumer products and the lack of disclosure about product ingredients on labels. To learn more about how you can advocate for keeping harmful chemicals out of consumer products visit the Coalition for a Safe & Health Connecticut’s website at <http://safehealthyct.org/>. 

Original article: “Endocrine Disruptors and Asthma-Associated Chemicals in Consumer Products”, by Robin E. Dodson and colleagues. Published online at ehponline.org on March 8 2012.

Predisposing Children to Asthma During Pregnancy


The symptoms of asthma can often be controlled with appropriate medications; however, for some individuals asthma is not easily controlled with regular asthma medications, resulting in more asthma attacks. A recent study analyzing data from almost 2,500 Black and Hispanic children found that those between the ages of 8 and 17 with uncontrolled asthma were more likely to have mothers who smoked during pregnancy. Even when researchers controlled for current tobacco exposure, education and socioeconomic status the association did not change. Although smoking at any time during pregnancy is harmful, it was found that children with uncontrolled asthma were more likely to have mothers who smoked throughout their pregnancy. It has been suggested that smoking while pregnant can damage the lungs of the fetus or initiate genetic changes that later lead to asthma. The study results demonstrate that decisions women make while pregnant can have consequences for their children up to 17 years later. This association is noticeable among women from ethnic minorities, given they are more likely to smoke during pregnancy. The full study will appear in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.



Original Article: “Teens Whose Moms Smoked While Pregnant May Have Worse Asthma”, published June 4, 2012 on the U.S. News and World Report’s HealthDay at <http://www.healthday.com/>.

Why Many Kids Have Low Adherence to Asthma Meds

Many parents can't or won't pay out-of-pocket expenses to fill their kids' asthma prescriptions. A study of insurance claims for almost 9,000 U.S. children, published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, found that increased out-of-pocket costs for daily asthma-control drugs was associated with significantly lower medication adherence and higher hospitalization rates. Some other reasons why adherence may be so low include parents forgetting to fill prescriptions or feeling it's not important, especially if their child isn't experiencing symptoms daily. To increase adherence, parents of kids with asthma should have a written plan of care and be referred to a specialist. Instead of keeping money in their pockets, parents should make sure kids have their inhalers ready "in their pockets" to keep their asthma symptoms under control.

Original Article: "Most Parents Don't Fill Their Kids' Asthma Meds – Study", posted March 27, 2012 on *The Wall Street Journal Health Blog* at <http://blogs.wsj.com/health/2012/03/27/most-parents-dont-fill-their-kids-asthma-meds-study/> 

Hartford Courant

Keep Courant! Asthma News Around Connecticut

Getting Serious About Idling School Buses

Durham School Services faces \$90,000 in federal fines and \$348,000 worth of environmental projects to settle charges that it regularly allowed its school buses to idle excessively in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. This is just one example of how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is working to reduce the amount of diesel pollution on school grounds, which can be particularly harmful to children with asthma and other respiratory problems.

Original Article: "Feds Hammer Company For Idling School Buses", by Josh Kovner. Published April 10, 2012 on Courant.com.



CT Children's Easy Breathing Program Receives EPA Award

Congratulations to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center's Easy Breathing Program[®] for being nationally recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency! CCMC's Easy Breathing Program[®], championed by Dr. Michelle Cloutier, was one of four hospitals in the nation to receive a National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management. The Easy Breathing Program[®] helps pediatricians diagnose, classify, and treat children with asthma. According to EPA officials, one of the highlights of the Easy Breathing Program[®] is its large database of more than 100,000 children with asthma, which is used for research.

Original Article: "CT Children's Medical Center Gets Award For Asthma Program", by William Weir. Published May 2, 2012 on Courant.com.



* All images courtesy Google images or article source websites

Asthma Resources

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

www.aafa.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov/asthma

National Institutes of Health

<http://health.nih.gov>

The New England Asthma Regional Council

www.asthmaregionalcouncil.org

CT Department of Public Health

<http://www.ct.gov/dph/asthma>

Contact your local health department or hospital for a list of programs and services

SUMMER 2012

Region II Asthma Coalition Newsletter

Central CT Health District
505 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109
www.ccthd.org



Phone: 860.665.8571
Fax: 860.667.5835
E-mail: hnorcia@newingtonct.gov

Got ideas? We want to hear them!

If there is a topic, event, advertisement, website, or book that you would like to see featured in this newsletter, please contact Angela Colantonio at AColantonio@mph.uchc.edu



Region II Asthma Coalition Members

Aetna Better Health
American Lung Association
Central CT AHEC
Central CT Health District
CT Coalition of Environmental Justice
CT Department of Public Health
CT Children's Medical Center -Asthma Center
Community Health Network
Community Health Services
Farmington Valley Health District
Hartford Health and Human Services Department
Hartford Public Schools
Merck Pharmaceuticals
New Britain Asthma Initiative
New Britain Health Department
North Central District Health Department
Plainville-Southington Health District
South Windsor Health Department
Windsor Health Department

Want to be a member of the Region II Asthma Coalition? Contact Hilary Norcia at 860.665.8571