

BREATHING SPACE

Respiratory Disease Newsletter

*Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Division
Chronic Disease & Environmental Epidemiology Section*



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BREATHING SPACE, a quarterly respiratory disease newsletter, is produced by the Minnesota Department of Health. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide health professionals, school nurses, and community members with current research, information, and resources on respiratory disease.

This newsletter is also distributed electronically. To receive an electronic version, contact:
jennifer.walker@health.state.mn.us

For more information, go to the MDH asthma website at:
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma

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New Health Rules Limit Second Hand Smoke in Offices, Factories, Warehouses and Similar Places of Work

The Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) was enacted in 1975 to protect public health by restricting smoking in offices. The rules were amended in 2002 to include new requirements for offices, factories, warehouses, and similar places of work. The new rules, effective September 23, 2003, will regulate ventilation requirements in smoking-permitted areas of offices, factories, warehouses, and similar places of work.

The new rules provide employers with two options:

- Designate smoking-permitted areas and comply with new ventilation and separation requirements; or
- Designate the entire facility as smoke-free.

The new ventilation and separation requirements include the following:

- The smoking-permitted area must be maintained at a negative pressure with respect to adjacent or connected nonsmoking areas
- Air from smoking-permitted areas must not be re-circulated into nonsmoking areas
- Air from the smoking-permitted area must be exhausted directly to the outdoors
- The smoking-permitted area must have one of the following:
 - A wall with closed doors, except to permit necessary entry and exit, that separates the smoking-permitted area from areas where smoking is not allowed; or
 - A ventilation system that ensures that all air that crosses the boundary between the nonsmoking and smoking-permitted areas only flows from the nonsmoking to the smoking-permitted area.

For more information please visit the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit website at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair or contact the Indoor Air Unit at 651-215-0909 or 1-800-798-9050.



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Staff Changes

Over the summer, three staff left the asthma team. Kelly Raatz is at home with her baby girl and preschool son. Dianne Kocourek Ploetz, after splitting her time between asthma and tobacco, has returned to the Tobacco Section full-time. Andrea Todd is now Research Coordinator at Sports and Orthopedic Specialists. We appreciate all the good work they did and we will miss them very much!

We are pleased to welcome Stephanie Bisson Belseth, a nurse practitioner who played a key role in developing and implementing the Healthy Learners Asthma Initiative in the Minneapolis public schools. Through a contractual agreement with Minneapolis public schools, she is working part-time with the Asthma Staff. Stephanie can be reached at: stephanie.belseth@health.state.mn.us.

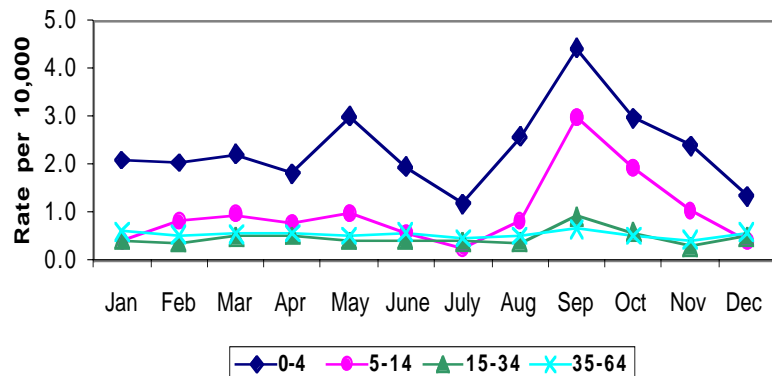
Seasonal Patterns of Hospitalizations Due to Asthma

In Minnesota, hospitalizations due to asthma follow seasonal patterns. The largest number of hospitalizations is seen in the fall, usually in September, with a smaller peak in the spring. The lowest number of hospitalizations for asthma is generally seen in July. In 2000, there were 4,446 asthma-related hospitalizations across all ages in Minnesota, ranging from a low of 236 in July to a high of 656 in September. This pattern of a low point in July followed by a fall peak has been consistent over the years for which the data is available (1995-2000). Other states, including Michigan, Nebraska and Vermont, have reported similar patterns.

As shown in the graph below, the most distinct peaks are seen in children, with children under 5 having the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations throughout the year. Older age groups exhibit less seasonal variation. (Note that persons aged 65 and older were not included in the graph because of the difficulty in distinguishing asthma from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in this age group.)

The causes of the fall increase in asthma hospitalizations are believed to include respiratory infections and increased pollen counts. For more information, contact Wendy Brunner at 612-676-5541 or wendy.brunner@health.state.mn.us.

Asthma-related Hospitalizations for Minnesotans Age 0 to 64 Years by Month of Admission, 2000



Technical notes:

- 1) Hospitalization data comes from the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA).
- 2) Asthma hospitalizations were those with asthma listed as the primary diagnosis (ICD-9 code 493.0-493.9).
- 3) Rates equal the number of hospitalizations with a primary diagnosis of asthma divided by the population.
- 4) These rates underestimate true rates of asthma hospitalization in Minnesota because 10% of Minnesota hospitals do not report data to MHA and admissions of Minnesota residents to out-of-state hospitals are not included.

Upcoming Events

West Central Region

Asthma Coalition Meeting

September 16, 2003, 12 pm
Lake Region Hospital, Fergus Falls
Connie Graff, 218-739-3709
connie.graff@alamn.org

Mold Remediation Conf.

October 13-15, 2003
Radison Hotel Metrodome,
Minneapolis, MN
www.cpheo.umn.edu/mold

PACE Trainings:

NW Region

September 26-27, 2003

7 Clans Casino, Thief River Falls

October 25, 2003

North Country Hospital, Bemidji
Lyann Yates, 1-800-586-4872 x 601
lyann.yates@alamn.org

NE Region

September 11, 2003

Fitger's Conference Room, Duluth
Pat McKone, 218-726-4721
pat.mckone@alamn.org

SW Region

September 26-27, 2003

Jackpot Junction, Redwood Falls

October 22, 2003

Prairie River Casino, Granite Falls
Kris Brands, 507-532-7216
Kris.brands@alamn.org

SE Region

October 4, 2003

Eagle Bluff Environmental Center,
Lanesboro

December 3, 2003

Cabella's, Owatonna
Dave Towers, 507-536-9955

WC Region

October 25, 2003

Connie Graff, 218-739-3709
connie.graff@alamn.org

Central Region

December 12-13, 2003

Holiday Inn, St. Cloud
Kathy Behnham, 320-255-9922
kathy.behnham@alamn.org

Asthma Educator Course:

October 29-30, 2003
Riverwood Inn and Conference
Center, Monticello
Glory Dennison 1-800-LUNGUSA

Provider Tips for Dealing with Seasonal Asthma Symptoms

Based on the seasonal trends of asthma (see page 2), providers may want to:

- Ensure that children returning to school, and especially those attending for the first time, have access to medications and know how to use them.
- Encourage regular "well asthma" check-ups at the end of the summer and in early spring so that asthma controller therapy can be stepped up/adjusted as needed. Those with symptoms or poorly controlled asthma should have more frequent asthma check-ups.

For more information about these and other tips, contact Stephanie Bisson Belseth at 612-676-5545 or Susan Ross at 612-676-5629.

Request for Proposals for Tobacco-free Communities in Minnesota: Local and Populations-at-risk Intervention Grants

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Tobacco Prevention and Control Program is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) and soliciting proposals for Minnesota-based community organizations to develop and implement strategies for achieving tobacco-free environments, implementing comprehensive school-based tobacco prevention programs, and reducing youth access to tobacco in Minnesota communities. Approximately \$3,250,000 per year in state funds is available to community organizations under this announcement. The MDH will fund projects demonstrating a tobacco prevention approach that is inclusive of science-based, population-based, multi-partner, and multi-strategy approaches in the community.

A complete copy of the RFP is available on the department's website at: www.health.state.mn.us. Scroll to "Announcements: Grants, Loans, Comment Periods" and then click on "Request for Proposals for Tobacco-Free Communities in Minnesota - Local and Populations-at-Risk Intervention Grants."

Questions regarding the RFP should be directed to Cindy Borgen at 651- 281-9807 or cindy.borgen@health.state.mn.us.

Setting the PACE for Minnesota

The Physician Asthma Care Education (PACE) program, a multi-faceted seminar to improve physician awareness, attitudes, ability, and application of communication and therapeutic skills for asthma, is being offered throughout the state. Each Minnesota Asthma Coalition region will hold two trainings per year over the next three years. To date, a total of 18 primary care providers attended two trainings held in Saint Cloud and Saint Paul.

For a training in your area, check out the Upcoming Events section or go to the ALAMN website at www.alamn.org/prof/Courses.asp.

Questions about lung health?

Call 1-800-548-8252
American Lung Association
Call Center

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For more information, or to request this material in another format contact: Deb Hill at 612-676-5213 or deborah.hill@health.state.mn.us
MN Relay Service TDD: 1-800-627-3528

Breathing Space is also available on the MDH Asthma website:
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma

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Asthma Camps

This summer over 350 children attended one of five American Lung Association of Minnesota asthma camps held throughout Minnesota. Each camp offered an educational and fun summer camping experience for boys and girls with asthma. Campers learned more about their asthma, the proper techniques for taking medications and how to better manage their asthma. Recreational activities included swimming, canoeing/kayaking, arts and crafts, fishing, and much more. Medical supervision and instruction at camp was provided 24 hours per day by an incredible group of volunteers that included doctors, nurses, pharmacists and respiratory care practitioners. For more information about the asthma camps, go to the American Lung Association of Minnesota website at www.alamn.org/asthma/asthmacamps.asp.

On-Line Asthma Action Plan

The on-line Asthma Action Plan (AAP) is now available on the MDH website. The AAP is a tool to help asthma patients and medical professionals manage and prevent asthma symptoms while providing information that is crucial to those who come in contact with or care for people with asthma.

To find out more information or to use the AAP, go to the MDH asthma website at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/. If you have questions, contact Susan Ross at 612-676-5629.



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