September Peak

Please remember that in Minnesota the number of hospitalizations due to asthma peaks in September. This pattern has been consistent since 1998, the earliest year for which MDH has data on asthma hospitalization trends. Though there is no single, proven reason for this peak, it is believed to be influenced by respiratory infections and increased pollen and mold counts.

To minimize or reduce hospitalizations, especially in children in September, it is advisable to:

- Schedule a “well-asthma” visit this summer with the child’s health care provider to review the child’s asthma management plan.
- Obtain an up-to-date Asthma Action Plan* from the child’s health care provider and get copies for the school nurse and/or day care provider.
- Make sure the child has asthma rescue medications, holding chambers, and peak flow meters for home and school.
- Make sure the child has access to his/her asthma medications and knows how to use them.
- Minimize the child’s exposure to things that trigger asthma, such as dust mites, secondhand smoke, mold, and pet dander.
- Schedule a flu-shot appointment with the child’s health care provider when the vaccine is available.

* Minnesota’s interactive asthma action plan can be found online at: http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/ActionPlan.html
One in five Minnesota adults with asthma describe their current health status as fair or poor while only 9 percent of Minnesota adults who do not have asthma report fair or poor health. (See graph below.) This difference could be due to incomplete control or management of asthma symptoms. It could also be that people with asthma are more likely to have other chronic conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), that result in poor health. In the same survey, 21 percent of adults with asthma reported that they had experienced a day or more of activity limitations due to asthma in the past year.

Source: Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

**Certified Asthma Educator Information**

- Dr. Linda B. Ford scholarships are awarded which cover the cost of taking the Certified Asthma Educator (AE-C) exams.

For more information, go to: [http://www.naecb.org/documents/ApplicationFormfortheLindaBformfields_007.doc](http://www.naecb.org/documents/ApplicationFormfortheLindaBformfields_007.doc)

- The fees for the National Asthma Educator Certification Board will increase on August 4, 2006. The increases are as follows:
  - Initial Examination and Recertification $295, Repeat Examination $195

- Asthma education reimbursement information can be found at: [http://www.naecb.org/cbr/](http://www.naecb.org/cbr/)

- With 93 Certified Asthma Educators, Minnesota continues to have the most AE-Cs of any state in the country.

- Other information about AE-C can be found at [www.naecb.org](http://www.naecb.org)

**Washington County - continued from page 1**

- Conducting a multi-dimensional public awareness campaign about asthma targeted to the general public, coaches, health care providers, and people with asthma;
- Improving the department’s internal capacity to assist the public in recognizing asthma symptoms and environmental triggers;
- Recruiting members and supporting efforts of a county-based asthma coalition;
- Providing resources to families and providers to help raise awareness and improve asthma management; and,
- Working with the Minnesota Environmental Initiative on their Clean Air Minnesota project to retrofit Washington County’s school buses.

In collaboration with the MDH Asthma program, a guide will be developed that local public health agencies can use to initiate asthma activities in their communities. For more information on the initiative, contact Julie Kilpatrick at Julie.Kilpatrick@co.washington.mn.us or 651-430-6724. For information on the guide, contact Erica Fishman at erica.fishman@health.state.mn.us or 651-201-5899.
West Central Reaches Child Care Providers

The West Central MAC reports that “Caring For Kids with Asthma” was presented to day care providers in Fergus Falls, MN, on May 4, 2006. Seventeen day care providers attended and determined that, between themselves, they care for at least 17 children with asthma. One provider will be adding a child with asthma this summer. Some participants also had personal experience with a family member with asthma.

The two-hour class began at 6 p.m. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, and demonstrations included the opportunity for hands-on experience. Educators for this event were Connie Graff and Vickie Haberman who each did an excellent job. A wonderful chicken dinner was served by Jackee Lerol and provided by her employer Arrow Health. Sue Ewy and Tammy Anderson found and set up the room for the class, advertised and took registrations. Thank-you Connie and Vickie, Jackee and Arrow Health, and Sue and Tammy!

Evaluations were extremely positive, with most being “very satisfied.” Many requested copies of the power point presentations. Some of the responses on the evaluations included:

“Learned more cleaning techniques.”

“It was informational and it is nice to have this information. It gave me signs to look for and it was very helpful to know to look for triggers.”

“This was my first training of asthma and I am very comfortable with the knowledge I received to help me to better understand asthma.”

“This was a wonderful team effort! This was one of the best workshops I’ve attended.

NERAC Update

Lori Saari, regional coordinator for the North East regional Ashma Coalition, reports that she was on a panel consisting of herself, Pat McKone of ALAMN, and Jim Christenson, a Duluth police officer who has asthma. They were on the TV show Northland Voices to discuss the topic of asthma. In early May the Duluth mayor signed a proclamation for World Asthma Month. Pictures are on the NERAC page of the MAC Website (www.mnasthma.org).

South Central Region (SCRAC) Update

Nick Mueller Walk

The second annual Nick Mueller walk to raise asthma awareness was held on May 6 in New Ulm. Nick Mueller was a New Ulm High School student who died in Sept. 2004 of a severe asthma attack. This year’s walk to remember his life drew approximately 75 participants who came because they or a family member have asthma. The SCRAC was fortunate to have strong support from local TV, radio, and newspapers. Funds raised at the walk will be used to support the efforts of the SCRAC and are shared with the Nick Mueller Scholarship Fund. For more information contact Erin Simmons, SCRAC Coordinator, 507-381-8257.

Pharmacist Training

The SCRAC sponsored Asthma “Interventions for Busy Pharmacists” on March 16 at Maggie’s in Mankato. Dr. Don Uden, Pharm,D and Chair of the MAC presented the course to 36 participants, including 21 pharmacists.

After school program training

Volunteers from the SCMAC provided 10-minute presentations in March and April for the Mankato School District’s after-school program, reaching about 100 youth in grades K-6. The program included demonstrations and interactive discussions about what asthma is, how to identify symptoms, and what to do if you or a friend is having an asthma attack.

MAC Changes

Three staffing changes are occurring at the MAC. Erin Simmons has accepted a position with the Mankato Area Smoke Free Coalition in the Tobacco Control Division. She will no longer be working with MAC at the statewide level but will continue with the South Central Coalition. In East Central, Kanabec County has re-assigned Lori Swanson and will be having a different person coordinate that region. In the Metro area, Sally Smaida has resigned, and American Lung Association of the Upper Midwest (ALAUM) is considering candidates to both function as Metro asthma coordinator and undertake responsibilities on the American Cities grant.
MDH Staff Member Leaves

Sally Sabathier, Office Adminsitration Specialist, who was with MDH for the last year and a half, has left the MDH Asthma Program and gone to work for Big Brothers and Big Sister of the Greater Twin Cities Area. We will miss her laughter, her smile, her well decorated work space, and her incredible organizational skills.

Sally was the contact person for many of the activities of the MDH Asthma Program. If you are calling MDH for the Asthma Program, still call 651-201-5909. Other staff members are returning calls made to that number until we hire a replacement for Sally.

Coach’s Asthma Clipboard

Online asthma training for coaches, referees, physical education teachers!
Go to: www.WinningWithAsthma.org,
to check out what a coach should know about asthma.

Learn: - Asthma basics
  - What to do during an asthma attack
  - How to help athletes manage their symptoms so they can play their very best.

Get: A free coach’s clipboard with instructions on what to do during an asthma attack.

It takes just a few minutes to learn the steps to help your team and maybe even save a player’s life!

Questions? 651-201-5909 or 1-877-925-4189

Questions about lung health?
Call 1-800-548-8252
American Lung Association Call Center

MDH Staff Contact Information:
Asthma Program Telephone Number: 651-201-5909
Toll Free Number: 1-877-925-4189
Asthma Web Site: http://www.health.state.mn.us/asthma/

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