Back to school with an Asthma Action Plan

With the start of the school year and children returning to classrooms, parents are once again checking school supply lists for things such as pencils, pens, note books, paper and other school supplies. School nurse Lillian Levine, along with other school nurses, tell parents that an Asthma Action Plan (AAP) must be on this check off list if their child has asthma. Ms. Levine, a Licensed School Nurse (LSN), and Health Services Coordinator with the St. Francis school district and a Certified Asthma Educator (AE-C), says, “An AAP gives the school health staff

continued on page 3
Preventing Pertussis:
A physician’s perspective
by Dr. Ryan Dick

Happy Early Fall! As a family doc, it’s this time of the year that I see my beloved infants and toddlers with their congestion, coughs, and fevers. And who can be surprised!? If it isn’t the big brother bringing something home from daycare, there are plenty of other opportunities (family reunions, grocery stores, baby yoga…) to catch something fun and exciting. My three year old loves to play with the stuffed animals at the library. Can you picture me cringing at the germ factor as she gives each one a big hug? The only good thing to be said about most cough and cold illnesses is that they typically last for 7 to 10 days. They also rarely lead to something serious like pneumonia.

But now there is something bigger and meaner in Minnesota: Whooping Cough. A “Super-Cough” that lasts super long and is super infectious. It is a really special and unfortunate bug for those who have forgotten to be immunized. Minnesota doctors have already seen a huge increase in the number of infected families this year, and I anticipate only seeing more infected families this fall and winter. While many adults will be miserable with the prolonged symptoms, small children may require treatment in the hospital. There have already been 13 pertussis-related deaths in the United States this year.

For those unfamiliar with this illness, “Whooping Cough” is spread by Pertussis bacteria from coughing, sneezing, or close contact with family members. It starts off as mild congestion or cough, but instead of gradually getting better after 7 to 10 days, it gets dramatically worse. The diagnosis becomes more obvious as a cough that is difficult to control. Sometimes after a large coughing spell, kids will make a “whooping” sound as they take in a deep breath. Symptoms often times can last for months, even after being treated by antibiotics.

Do you want to avoid or lessen symptoms? Do you want to protect a small child in your family? Short and simple: Get Immunized. Vaccines are available for children older than 6 weeks and all adults (including pregnant patients!) It has very few side effects, but talk to your regular doctor if you have concerns. Antibiotics might be helpful, but many patients end up with several weeks of symptoms even after taking them.

Ryan Dick, M.D. is a family medicine physician, with HealthEast Clinic – Vadnais Heights, MN.

Additional resources:
Center for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/
specific information regarding a child’s asthma symptoms and treatment. This crucial information is needed to ensure that the child’s asthma is managed appropriately in the school setting. The AAP should be completed by a health care provider and shared with health service staff, athletic coaches, physical education teachers, child care providers, and after school program staff. All those staff members need to know that a child has asthma.”

An Asthma Action Plan should contain individualized information about a child’s asthma, including the following:

- A list of specific triggers that can make the child’s asthma worse or cause an asthma episode
- Symptoms the child might have when experiencing an asthma episode
- Personalized peak flow levels indicating the child’s green, yellow and red peak zone numbers
- A list of daily controller medications (if any), how much to take, how often, and when; even if they are taken at home
- Rescue medications that should be taken, how much and how often if a child begins to have breathing difficulties/asthma symptoms
- When to seek medical attention and what steps to take according to symptoms and or peak flow numbers
- Healthcare provider contact information

An AAP should also contain information about whether the child may carry a rescue inhaler and if the child may self-administer inhaler medication. A parent discussion with the school nurse is necessary to make this determination along with a school nurse evaluation of the child’s ability to self-administer rescue inhaler medication.

With the influenza season around the corner and the increasing number of pertussis cases, parents should also check with their child’s health care provider about the flu vaccine and an updated pertussis vaccine. Both vaccines provide protection from serious upper respiratory infections that can trigger asthma in children with the disease.

Templates for AAPs, in both English and Spanish, are available at [http://www.health.state.mn.us/asthma/ActionPlan.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/asthma/ActionPlan.html)

A sample template for a letter that school nurses and other school health personnel can use for requesting asthma action plans from parents can be found at [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/documents/FormsF1-F34/f02.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/documents/FormsF1-F34/f02.pdf)

High pollen counts tied to ED Visits for Asthma

A new study by Lyndsey Darrow PhD, with Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health, recommends that, for people who have asthma triggered by allergies, pollen surveillance and related warning systems may help keep them out of the emergency room.

Dr. Darrow and her colleagues collected pollen samples from 1993 to 2004. They analyzed those samples for ragweed, grasses, and four species of trees. Daily pollen levels were compared with the number of emergency department (ED) visits for asthma in the Atlanta area.

Researchers found a 10-15% increase in asthma-related ED visits when pollen counts were highest, especially for Poaceae (true grasses) and...
Fall peak in Emergency Department visits for asthma

As with asthma hospitalizations, rates of Emergency Department (ED) visits for asthma follow seasonal patterns. Typically, the highest rates occur during the fall with a smaller elevation in the spring. However, as shown in the graph below, in 2010 this pattern differed for children under age 5, who had a higher rate in the spring than the fall.

In 2010, there were 19,974 ED visits for asthma across all ages in Minnesota, ranging from a low of 1,180 in July to a high of 2,209 in October. The fall and spring peaks in ED visits are more pronounced in the younger age groups. (Note that persons aged 65 and older are not included in the graph because of the difficulty of distinguishing asthma from COPD in this age group.)

If you have downloaded the Asthma in Minnesota: 2012 Epidemiology Report, please note that a revised version of the report, as well as an errata document, have been posted at: http://www.health.state.mn.us/asthma/report2012.html. The data on asthma-related emergency department (ED) visits for 2010 included in the original report are incorrect. All charts including ED visit data have been corrected, as have references to ED visits in the text.

According to the revised data, asthma ED visits did not increase in 2010. In fact, between 2005 and 2010, rates of ED visits for asthma in Minnesota were relatively stable.

Rates of Asthma ED Visits by Month and Age Group, Age 0-64, Minnesota

![Graph of Rates of Asthma ED Visits by Month and Age Group, Age 0-64, Minnesota](image_url)
Protect your family and yourself, get vaccinated!

Influenza

Every year influenza circulates in the United States causing respiratory illness. For most people the flu results in mild illness, but for people with asthma or other respiratory conditions the flu can be more serious. For these people, flu can cause complications like pneumonia or bronchitis. The flu can also trigger asthma attacks and worsening of asthma symptoms even for people with well-controlled asthma. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. People with asthma should get the flu vaccine that contains the inactivated or killed virus, the “flu shot,” not the nasal spray, FluMist.

It is common that people with egg allergies are also affected by asthma. Since flu vaccines are made using chicken eggs, it was thought that people with egg allergies could not be vaccinated. Several studies have now shown that people with a mild egg allergy can be safely vaccinated. Check with your doctor to find out if you can be vaccinated.

Tell others around you that they need a flu shot too! The CDC recommends everyone age 6 months and older get a yearly flu shot. When the people around you are protected, they’re less likely to spread the flu to you.

To find a clinic near you see, www.mdhflu.com and click on “find a flu shot clinic.”

Pneumococcal (PPSV23)

It is also recommended that children and adults aged 2-64 years with asthma and all adults over 65 get vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine, called PPSV23. This vaccine will help protect against pneumonia and other pneumococcal infections. Ask your health care provider about it when you get your flu shot.

Pertussis (Tdap)

Get your Tdap vaccine to protect yourself from pertussis! Minnesota is currently experiencing an epidemic of pertussis (whooping cough). Pertussis is very contagious and can cause prolonged, sometimes extreme, coughing, which is often more severe in persons with asthma. Tdap is recommended for adolescents at age 11-12 years in place of their Td (tetanus) booster. Tdap is also recommended for all adults who haven’t had a dose before. Ask your doctor about getting a dose of Tdap vaccine!

For more information on any of the vaccines mentioned here, visit www.health.state.mn.us/immunize.

FDA approves Tudorza Pressair to treat COPD

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration in August approved Tudorza Pressair (aclidinium bromide) for the long-term maintenance treatment of bronchospasm (narrowing of the airways in the lung) associated with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Tudorza Pressair, a dry powder inhaler used twice daily, is a long-acting anti-muscarinic agent that helps muscles around the large airways of the lungs stay relaxed to improve airflow.

For more information go to the FDA website: http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/m313052.htm
Five years since Freedom to Breathe Law took effect

October 1, 2012, will mark the five year birthday of Minnesota’s Freedom to Breathe Law which provides workers and the public protection from the health hazards of secondhand smoke exposure. The law covers nearly all indoor public places and places of employment including bars, restaurants, private clubs; office and industrial workplaces, retail stores, common areas of rental apartment buildings, hotels and motels, public transportation including taxis, auditoriums, arenas and meeting rooms, day care premises, health care facilities and clinics.

MDH is teaming up with ClearWay Minnesota and other state partners to recognize the 5 year birthday of Freedom to Breathe. Watch for additional information on events at: http://freshairmn.org/

The Freedom to Breathe provisions amended the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) which was adopted in 1975 and was the first law in the nation. MCIAA was included on as one of the nation’s historic events on “A Century of Cigarettes” timeline which was displayed at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health, held in Kansas City, MO.

For information about Freedom to Breathe and listing of all smoking-prohibited areas, go to: http://www.health.state.mn.us/freedomtobreathe/

Riverside Plaza to go smoke free

Riverside Plaza is the largest housing complex in Minnesota, with 1,300 apartments that are home to over 4,000 residents, the majority of whom are Somalis. For the past year, WellShare International has worked with the residents’ association and Sherman Associates, the management company, to bring about a smoke-free policy at Riverside. Residents voted to make the complex smoke free, and now WellShare International is helping to roll out the policy, starting January 1, 2013.

WellShare International recently completed a video about the new policy which is being shown on the in-house TV system. It features information in English, Somali, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Oromo.

This project received support from the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support as part of the Healthy Housing, Healthy Communities Project (part of the Statewide Health Improvement Program).

Here is the link to the video: http://www.wellshareinternational.org/health-topics/tobacco
St. Cloud State University goes smoke free

After two years of planning, St. Cloud State University is now a tobacco-free campus. Effective August 29, 2012, the policy prohibits all forms of tobacco use on campus including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and hookah, a water pipe. Tobacco use will be allowed in traditional Native American ceremonies, scientific studies, and theatrical productions, or in private vehicles on university property.

The university is the sixth of seven universities in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to be tobacco free. The tobacco-free policy provides a cleaner and healthier campus for students and employees. Learn more about it at: http://www.stcloudstate.edu/tobaccofree/

Tobacco-Free Post-Secondary College Campuses in Minnesota:
Progress to Date

When it comes to providing a tobacco-free college campus, Minnesota is one of the national leaders with nearly 50 post-secondary college campuses that have adopted a tobacco-free campus policy. Reducing tobacco use and exposure on campuses of post-secondary institutions has emerged as a high priority due to the increase in tobacco use among 18-24 year olds.

The MDH Tobacco-Free Communities grantees and Statewide Health Improvement Program Grantees (SHIP) are focusing local efforts to work with campuses to adopt and implement these policies to protect students, faculty, staff and visitors from tobacco smoke exposure and increase linkages to cessation. Tobacco-free campus policies cover entrances to buildings, grounds, athletic fields and stadiums, dormitories, and other areas. These campuses include both two-year and four-year institutions.

In November 2011, the American College Health Association (ACHA) released a “Position statement on Tobacco on College and University Campuses.” This position statement is a guide to “assist colleges and universities with evaluating progress toward or becoming or maintaining tobacco-free living and learning environments.” The nine positions that are recommended for campuses to take address policy, prevention and cessation. To read the position, go to: http://www.acha.org/Publications/docs/Position_Statement_on_Tobacco_Nov2011.pdf

For a full listing of tobacco-free post-secondary campuses in Minnesota, go to: http://www.lungusa.org/associations/states/minnesota/ and click on the interactive Tobacco-Free Campuses map in the upper right-hand corner. By clicking on a campus, you will be able to read about the campus policy.

For a list of the tobacco-free post-secondary campuses in the nation, go to: http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/reports-resources/tobacco-policy-trend-reports/college-report.pdf

ClearwayMinnesota has produced an informative video you can view here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd8QowzV9m0&feature=BFa&list=UUKet7tl3mOr1ScDTuUSREuw
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall ‘12</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategic Collaboration for Effective Asthma Management in Schools:</strong> Did you know effective asthma management in schools could improve student health and performance? Leading experts will discuss best practices for asthma management in schools and share collaboration strategies. Register free through the EPA at <a href="https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/606139070">https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/606139070</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2pm CST</td>
<td><strong>Tobacco-Free College Campus Initiative:</strong> Dr. Howard Koh, the Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will be present at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health to announce a national initiative to eliminate tobacco use on college campuses. View the webcast at <a href="http://www.TFCCI.org">www.TFCCI.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td><strong>Clean and Healthy Tribal Casinos Workshop:</strong> Improving Indoor Air Quality through the Lens of Culture, Science, and Technology. Topics include HVAC systems, green cleaning, tribal tobacco policies, and building performance. Sponsored by Grand Portage Chippewa, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, and US EPA. Free registration; contact Tonya Conner, <a href="mailto:tconner@boisforte-nsn.gov">tconner@boisforte-nsn.gov</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 18-19</strong></td>
<td><strong>MN COPD Summit:</strong> Join us for the 5th Minnesota COPD Summit hosted by the Minnesota COPD Coalition and the American Lung Association in Minnesota. The COPD Summit is designed for health care professionals, delivery systems, and health plans. Hot breakfast and snack included. Find more information at <a href="http://bit.ly/NnBDJg">http://bit.ly/NnBDJg</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage Lodge and Casino</td>
<td><strong>Asthma Discussion Group:</strong> Clinical Utility of FeNO: Dr. Kaiser Lim will be presenting on the clinical utility of FeNO in the management of asthma. The measurement of fractional nitric oxide (NO) concentration in exhaled breath (FENO) is a quantitative, noninvasive, simple, and safe method of measuring airway inflammation. Find more information at <a href="http://bit.ly/NnBDJg">http://bit.ly/NnBDJg</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Casino Drive</td>
<td><strong>Asthma Educator Institute:</strong> The Asthma Educator Institute is a two-day course to teach healthcare professionals how to help asthma patients manage their illness. Many participants go on to take National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB) examination to become certified asthma educators. Find more information at <a href="http://bit.ly/NnBDJg">http://bit.ly/NnBDJg</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage, MN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30-12:30pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDH Snelling Office Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645 Energy Park Drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Paul MN 55108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15-9:45am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Lung Assn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>490 Concordia Ave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Paul MN 55103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September 25-26</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Lung Assn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>490 Concordia Ave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Paul MN 55103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Fall ‘12 Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **September 27** | **Implementation and Interpretation Spirometry Training:** The full-day training on September 27, 2012 is split into two sessions – implementation of spirometry in the morning and interpretation of spirometry in the afternoon. Find more information at [http://bit.ly/NnBDJg](http://bit.ly/NnBDJg). | American Lung Assn  
490 Concordia Ave  
St Paul MN 55103 |
Bloomington, MN |
| **October 3-5** | **Community Health Conference:** Strengthening Public Health: Join MDH at the 2012 Community Health Conference to link past successes with revolutionary ideas, creative innovations, and new partnerships, in order to improve the health of all Minnesotans now and into the future. Register at [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/ophp/system/conference](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/ophp/system/conference). | Cragun’s Conference Ctr  
Brainerd, MN |
| **October 23-24** | **COPD Educator’s Course:** The American Lung Association in Minnesota’s COPD Educator Course provides healthcare professionals with smoking cessation, spirometry, COPD management, medication guidelines, end of life issues, pulmonary rehabilitation, oxygen therapy and reducing re-admissions. Find more information at [http://bit.ly/NnBDJg](http://bit.ly/NnBDJg). | American Lung Assn  
490 Concordia Ave  
St Paul MN 55103 |
| **October 25-26** | **38th Annual Program Sharing Conference:** An exemplary 2-day learning opportunity about alcohol, tobacco, other drug abuse and violence prevention in Minnesota sponsored by the Minnesota Prevention Resource Center. Register online today at [www.emprc.org/ps2012](http://www.emprc.org/ps2012). | St Cloud River’s Edge Convention Center  
St Cloud MN |
| **November 1-2** | **2012 Got Your Shots? Immunization Conference:** This year’s conference will focus on adolescent immunization. Featured speakers include Dr. Paul Offit, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia; Donna Weaver, RN, MN, CDC; Dr. Robert Jacobson, Mayo Clinic; and Dr. Ed Ehlinger, Commissioner of Health. For details and registration go to [www.health.state.mn.us/immunize](http://www.health.state.mn.us/immunize). Connect with others before and during the conference by using the hashtag #ImmunizeMN on Twitter. | Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato  
Register Early! |
| **November 2-3** | **School Nursing on the Cutting Edge:** Join the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota (SNOM) at their annual conference November 2nd & 3rd to expand your nursing knowledge and network with fellow colleagues from around the state. Go to [www.minnesotaschoolnurses.org](http://www.minnesotaschoolnurses.org) for more information. | Ramada MOA  
2300 American Blvd E  
Bloomington MN 55425 |

*PAGE 9*
Asthma Program
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Division
85 East 7th Place
PO Box 64882
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
www.health.state.mn.us/asthma/

Editor: Kelly Raatz
To submit story ideas, provide feedback, or questions contact Kelly Raatz, Asthma Program Coordinator, at 651-201-5899 or kelly.raatz@state.mn.us

Contact the MDH Asthma Program at:
General Program number: 651-201-5909
Toll Free Number: 1-877-925-4189
MN Relay Service
TDD/TTY 651-201-5797

Subscribe to Breathing Space:
Click on link to receive Breathing Space newsletters electronically https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDH/subscriber/new?topic_id=MNMDH_49

Do you have questions about lung health?
Call the American Lung Association HelpLine at:
1-800-548-8252
(Hours 7:00am to 9:00pm Central Time)
Staffed by registered nurses and registered respiratory therapists to answer your lung health questions.

This newsletter is supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement #5U59EH000498-04 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

Staff:
Wendy Brunner
Epidemiologist, Asthma Surveillance
651-201-5895, Wendy.Brunner@state.mn.us

Janet Keysser
Asthma Program Director
651-201-5691, Janet.Keysser@state.mn.us

Kathleen Norlien
Environmental Research Scientist
651-201-4613, Kathleen.Norlien@state.mn.us

Hannah Rivenburgh
CDC Public Health Associate
651-201-5448, Hannah.Rivenburgh@state.mn.us

Susan Ross
RN, Clinical Advisor
651-201-5629, Susan.Ross@state.mn.us

Janis Smith
Administrative Program Support
651-201-5909, Janis.Smith@state.mn.us