

# the Consortium

QUARTERLY



St. Louis Regional **Asthma Consortium**

Spring 2007

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## Association of Asthma Educators Conference Adams Mark Hotel – St. Louis, July 27-30<sup>th</sup>

St. Louis is very fortunate to be the location for the 2007 Association of Asthma Educators (AAE) Annual Conference. According to Conference Chair Nina Zimmermann, "AAE is the premier interdisciplinary professional organization of individuals who educate patients and families affected by asthma."

Ms. Zimmermann is enthusiastic about this year's conference theme, *Addressing Urban and Rural Needs* because it reflects the importance of addressing asthma disparities in multiple and unique settings.

Workshop topics include the following:

- School programming
- Reimbursement coding
- Advanced pharmacology
- Educational assessment and approaches
- Cultural competency
- Exercise and asthma
- Vocal cord dysfunction and bronchial provocation.



Asthma Consortium Board Chairman Dr. Rick Kurz will be moderating a workshop titled *Strategies for Closing Gaps in Asthma Care*. The Missouri Foundation for Health will be participating in this workshop along with several leading public health officials. Plenary sessions will be led by Dr. John Kraemer, Dr. Eric Ambrecht, and Asthma Consortium board member Dr. Theresa Prosser, who will discuss *Asthma Friendly Pharmacies*, a component of the Asthma Consortium's CASL grant.

AAE will offer a pre-conference course on *Becoming an Asthma Educator and Care Manager*. This five-hour program—based on National Heart Lung Blood Institute Guidelines (1997, 2002) and GINA Guidelines for the management of asthma—will feature didactic presentations, interactive case studies and an up-to-date devices workshop. AAE has awarded the St. Louis Regional Asthma Consortium ten scholarships to *Becoming an Asthma Educator and Care Manager*. These scholarships will be made available to our members and affiliates. For information contact Lucy Reinhart at 314-977-8253 or [Ireinhart@asthma-stlouis.org](mailto:Ireinhart@asthma-stlouis.org).

On Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup> and Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup> the two-day AAE AE-C Review Course will be offered to prepare participants for the National Asthma Educator Certification Exam.

You can register online for the conference at [www.asthmaeducation.org](http://www.asthmaeducation.org) or call the AAE office at 1-888-988-7747.

asthma educators  
conference

To apply for an AAE scholarship to *Becoming an Asthma Educator and Care Manager* contact Lucy Reinhart at 314-977-8253 or [Ireinhart@asthma-stlouis.org](mailto:Ireinhart@asthma-stlouis.org).

### Visioning for the Future

Like the many determinants that affect asthma, reducing asthma morbidity is a multifaceted challenge. As the St. Louis Regional Asthma Consortium continues its drive to reduce morbidity and improve the quality of life for people with asthma in the St. Louis area, we—the staff, leaders and committee members—continually look for new and innovative ways to better serve the mission of the organization.



Over the past few months, the board of directors has been engaged in developing a strategic plan for the future of the organization. Part of that plan is identifying not only the needs of our community, but opportunities to make a real difference. But we need your help. The St. Louis Regional Asthma Consortium welcomes new partnerships, new members, new challenges, and new solutions. We want to know what you are doing in research and programming in order to put research into practice and help to disseminate the benefits of local programs and best practices to the broader community.

The purpose of a consortium is to bring together a group of organizations or individuals to participate in a joint venture too large for any one of the participants alone. Together we can make a difference.

Please let us hear from you.

Best regards,  
Susie Schau



### SLRAC Celebrates

Best wishes to the Asthma Consortium's Julie Durchholz on her upcoming June wedding. Staff and friends had a great time celebrating with the bride-to-be.

### St. Louis Smoke-Free Coalition Protests Camel No. 9 Party

The Asthma Consortium has joined the St. Louis Smoke-Free Coalition to help educate the community about the health risks of smoking and secondhand smoke. The Asthma Consortium is collecting signatures in support of smoke-free air. When the time is right the coalition will pursue a smoke-free ordinance for St. Louis city workplaces, including restaurants and bars.

The coalition kicked off with a protest against RJ Reynolds and the Upstairs Lounge, a local club hosting a Camel No. 9 party. "Ladies only" nights are being held in bars across the country, luring women with facials, manicures, makeup and hair styling—all to be enjoyed while smoking a free pack of "light and luscious" Camel No. 9. Protestors felt they got the message out, loud and clear—RJ Reynolds should stop targeting young women!

To join the St. Louis Smoke-Free Coalition contact Stacy Reliford at the American Cancer Society, 314-286-8158.



### Peak Flow Meters Get in the Right Hands



A special thank you goes to AstraZeneca for its generous donation of over 1,000 peak flow meters to the Asthma Consortium. School nurses participating in the Asthma 411 Initiative have used the peak flow meters to help students manage their asthma at school.

St. Louis Public School nurse Gwendolyn Pettaway has taken full advantage of this additional resource. The children with asthma at Cole Elementary visit her every day to get their peak flows ratings checked. Nurse Pettaway says that the peak flow meters have made it much easier for the students to monitor their asthma and keep it under control. Since not all students are able to afford or obtain peak flow meters on their own, the nurses and the students' parents are very grateful to AstraZeneca for helping the kids stay healthy.



Asthma 411 is an initiative to reduce asthma morbidity and improve quality of life of children with asthma in the school setting, helping to control and reduce the effects of asthma on school absences and academic achievement.

## Children Living Near Major Roads Face Higher Asthma Risk

Young children who live near a major road are significantly more likely to have asthma than children who live only blocks away, according to a study that appears in the May 1 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

The study found that children living within 75 meters (about 82 yards) of a major road had a 50 percent greater risk of having had asthma symptoms in the past year than were children who lived more than 300 meters (about 328 yards) away. Higher traffic volumes on the different roads were also related to increased rates of asthma.

“These findings are consistent with an emerging body of evidence that local traffic around homes and schools may be causing an increase in asthma,” says lead author Rob McConnell, M.D., professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. “This is a potentially important public health problem because many children live near major roads.”

More than 5,000 children ages 5 to 7 were involved in the study which was an expansion of the Children’s Health Study, currently underway in 13 southern California communities. The researchers determined how far each participating child lived from a major road – a freeway, large highway or a feeder road to a highway.

This study has implications for urban development. Dr. McConnell noted that in the future communities should “consider whether building parks, play areas, or homes right next to a major road is a wise land use decision in terms of health.”

*Printed with permission of Science Daily www.sciencedaily.com. This story has been adapted from a news release issued by the University of Southern California.*

## Congratulations

Congratulations to our partners, the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations-Clean Air Project (SLACO-CAP) and the Grace Hill Clean Air Project, for getting school bus drivers to turn off their engines instead of letting them idle.

These two organizations collaborated with a National EPA initiative, Clean School Bus USA, and the City of St. Louis to reduce vehicle emissions. In St. Louis vehicle exhaust is a leader in air pollution. Currently St. Louis City has an ordinance that prohibits a vehicle idling for more than 10 minutes, but this restriction has largely been ignored until now. With encouragement from Grace Hill and SLACO-CAP, several local school bus contractors are beginning to enforce their internal idling policies.

According to Clean School Bus USA, “Nationally, school buses travel more than four billion miles every year. That is enough to go to the sun and back.” In St. Louis, every day over 990 buses provide more than 21,900 children with transportation to and from school and related activities. That’s a lot of miles and a lot of diesel exhaust in the air we breathe.

## Girl Scout Troops Learn and Earn Asthma Patch



“Girls Scouts across the country are learning about asthma—asthma symptoms, how asthma affects breathing, and how certain lifestyle choices can affect their general health and well-being—and earning an Asthma Awareness Patch. So far, more than 7,000 Girl Scouts have earned the patch.

The Asthma Awareness Patch is a product of the collaboration between the American Lung Association of New York, the Asthma Coalition of Long Island, the Girl Scouts of the USA and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. The Asthma Coalition of Long Island will provide free Asthma Awareness Patch Program workbooks to any Girl Scout Council in the United States—all the council has to do is ask.

Here in the St. Louis area, the Asthma Consortium and the American Lung Association of the Central States are recognizing Asthma Awareness Month by offering asthma packets to troops interested in working on the patch. Inside the packets Girl Scout leaders will find the Asthma Consortium’s video “Asthma Action Plan: Understanding and Living with Asthma,” education handouts and enrichment activities—all meant to complement the Asthma Awareness Patch Program workbook.

To request an Asthma Consortium/ALA asthma packet, contact either Julie Durchholz at 314-977-4006, [jdurchholz@asthma-st.louis.org](mailto:jdurchholz@asthma-st.louis.org) or Annie Miller at the American Lung Association of the Central States, 314-645-5505 ext. 1004, [amiller@lungmo.org](mailto:amiller@lungmo.org). For more information on the Asthma Awareness Patch Program visit [www.girlscouts.com](http://www.girlscouts.com) or call 800-221-6707.

There is an exciting new area in asthma research that shows a lot of promise. Asthmatx developed a catheter-based procedure, known as bronchial thermoplasty, for the treatment of asthma. The Asthma Intervention Research (AIR) Trial tested this method, which was performed using a standard bronchoscope inserted into the patient's lungs through the nose or mouth. The tip of the catheter would expand to touch the targeted airways. Thermal energy was then used to reduce smooth muscle in the airways, making it easier for the patient to breathe.

According to a *New England Journal of Medicine* report, the Air Trial, with randomized and controlled clinical trials in 4 countries, demonstrated that this procedure significantly improved lung function and asthma-related quality of life. Subjects had better asthma control with less reliance on rescue medications.

Researchers were pleased to see that benefits continued throughout the year following the bronchial thermoplasty, and they hope to see similar results in the upcoming AIR2 Trial, which will have more participants. Bronchial thermoplasty could eventually provide a whole new approach for managing asthma in some patients.

The article "Asthma Control during the Year after Bronchial Thermoplasty" appeared in the March 29, 2007 edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. [www.nejm.org](http://www.nejm.org)

### Breathe Team Reaches Out

The Breathe Team is getting out into the community, giving a face to the Asthma Consortium while promoting asthma awareness and education. This group of volunteers and staff got moving with a walk team for the American Lung Association Asthma Walk in Forest Park. The next stop for the Breathe Team was Earth Day, followed by World Asthma Day at the Science Center. If you're interested in being a part of the Breathe Team, contact Julie Durchholz at 314-977-4006 or [jdurchholz@asthma-stlouis.org](mailto:jdurchholz@asthma-stlouis.org).



ALA Asthma Walk



Earth Day

## Thank You

Our sincere thanks to these companies for their in-kind donations for SLRAC events and initiatives.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Missouri  
AstraZeneca  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Sepracor

## Welcome New Members

Vonda Atherton  
Deborah Bennett,  
*Barnes-Jewish Hospital*  
Janvier Gasana  
Rob Kilo, *Pfizer*  
Patricia Morrow, *Wellpoint*



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### Want to have a say in your Consortium?

Join the committee of your choice by email at [reinhardt@asthma-stlouis.org](mailto:reinhardt@asthma-stlouis.org) or go to the website for more information at [www.asthma-stlouis.org](http://www.asthma-stlouis.org).

- May 31** World No Tobacco Day
- June 11** American Lung Association Asthma Day Camp at Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club
- June 21-22** American Lung Association Asthma Educator Course
- July 27-30** Association of Asthma Educators Annual Conference
- August 11** Asthma screening at the Galleria, sponsored by the Asthma Consortium, ACAAI and AstraZeneca