

# Washington State Asthma Program Email Newsletter

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## Websites

[American Lung Association of WA](#)

[WA Asthma Initiative](#)

[Department of Health Asthma Program](#)

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## Committee Meetings

WAI Practitioner Support, April 25, 10-11:00

Yakima Area Asthma Coalition, May 15, 4-5:00

WAI Data & Surveillance Committee, May 27, 3-4:30

WAI Steering Committee, May 28, 12:30-2:30

Southwest WA Asthma Coalition, July 9, 8-9:00

WAI Community-Based Activities, July 9, 10-11:00

## NEWS

**Asthma in Native Americans in Washington State Report Now Available** The report, "Asthma Among Native Americans", is now available on the Department of Health Asthma web page [here](#). Scroll down the page to the "Asthma Data Updates" section and follow the link. The report features BRFSS data from 2003 – 2006.

**FDA Probing Suicide Risks From Asthma Drug** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is investigating a possible link between Merck's best-selling asthma drug, Singulair, and suicide. Merck has updated the drug's labeling four times in the past year to include information on a range of side effects: tremors, anxiousness, depression and suicidal behavior.

**States Pressure EPA to Enforce Car Emissions Ruling** Washington, along with 17 other states, has filed suit against the U.S. EPA to require the agency to evaluate how it would regulate greenhouse gas emissions from cars and other vehicles. The petition is based on last year's Supreme Court decision that ruled the EPA has the authority to regulate emissions from new cars and trucks, and reasons given by EPA for declining to do so were insufficient.

**Handheld Device for the Measurement of Airway Inflammation** On March 3, the FDA granted 510(k) clearance for a handheld device (*Niox Mino*, Aerocrine Inc) that measures fractional exhaled nitric oxide for the assessment of asthma-related airway inflammation. The newly cleared device will allow physicians to measure underlying inflammation, allowing for better prediction of therapeutic response and risk of relapse.

**FDA Cautions Against Swallowing Tiotropium and Formoterol Capsules** Many patients receiving medication for asthma and COPD are swallowing capsules of inhalation powder rather than placing them in inhalation devices, the U.S. FDA announced in February. Although few adverse events were reported from capsule ingestion, this will not treat a patient's respiratory condition. Patients should be instructed in correct use of these devices, and those who do not appear to improve should be asked whether they are swallowing the capsule.

**Disparities: Expanding The Focus** The March/April issue of *Health Affairs* is devoted to disparities in health. The studies highlight how factors such as social determinants, disparities in the health care system, and the lack of diversity in the health professions coalesce to undermine the quality and fairness of U.S. health and health care. [Link](#)

## PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

### ***LIBERTY LAKE CONSIDERS BECOMING A NO-IDLE COMMUNITY***

The Liberty Lake City Council is considering making the entire city a "no-idle" zone to reduce emissions from car exhaust. Council members have agreed to consider passing a "no-idle" resolution after testimony from Tom Brattebo, with Spokane Regional Clean Air, told them about the health risks of exhaust when cars idle for more than 30 seconds. If approved, the resolution would be a recommendation – not a law that would be enforced by the Police Department. For more information, contact [Tom Brattebo](#).

## FUNDING AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

**West Coast Collaborative Diesel Emissions Reduction Grants** EPA Regions 9 and 10 have announced the availability of approximately \$5.1 million to deploy EPA or CARB verified or certified technologies to significantly reduce diesel emissions. Proposals are due July 1st. EPA Regions 9 and 10 anticipate awarding six to nine assistance agreements from this announcement, with awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Deadline: July 1, 2008. Questions may be directed to [Lucita Valiere](#), EPA Region 10. [RFP](#)

**Active Living Research Grant Program** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is accepting proposals for research that informs policy and environmental strategies for increasing physical activity among children and adolescents. Research grants range from \$50,000 to \$400,000 each. Dissertation awards will provide up to \$25,000 each. Deadline: May 14, 2008 [Link](#)

**Environmental Justice Small Grants Program** This EPA grant program is intended to support and empower low-income communities that are working on local solutions to local environmental and/or public health issues. Deadline: June 30, 2008. [Link](#)

**American Legacy Foundation Grants to Reduce Tobacco Use** The Small Innovative Grants Program awards up to \$100,000 for projects that advance creative, promising solutions to remedy the harm caused by tobacco use in America. Deadline: May 23, 2008 (Letters of Intent). [Link](#)

## RESOURCES

**Mold and Asthma Triggers Videos** The *Mold in your Home: Causes, Prevention, Cleanup and Attack Asthma at Home: A Practical Approach to Asthma "Trigger" Control and Prevention* videos, produced by the Northwest Clean Air Agency, are now available for download on their website. Spanish versions will be coming soon. [Link](#)

**Case Studies in Environmental Medicine CME** The CDC Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry offers a free CME program on environmental triggers of asthma. [Web-based](#) [PDF](#)

**Pharmaceutical E-mail Alerts for Physicians** The nonprofit iHealth Alliance is beginning an online network to send physicians e-mail alerts from pharmaceutical companies about warnings, recalls and drug-label changes. The alerts will be focused by specialty and will not include any marketing materials. [Link](#)

**Reducing Pesticide Exposure at Schools Fact Sheet Now in Spanish** The CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is now offering "[Reducción de la exposición a los pesticidas en las escuelas](#)" on their website. [English Version](#)

**The American Lung Association Breathe Easy Network** offers a free email air quality forecast service covering the Olympic region, Puget Sound, and Spokane. [Link](#)

**Call for Volunteers** Each year, ALAW partners with Camp Sealth on Vashon Island to provide an *Asthma-Friendly Camp* experience for children with Asthma. Children with asthma are integrated in with the regular camp sessions. Camp Sealth is seeking medical professionals or *advanced* medical/nursing students to participate in camp from anywhere between 4 to 13 days. Sessions run June – August. Contact [Rick Taylor](#), Camp Director.

**New Web-Based Asthma Assessment Tool** AAAAI is offering a free web-based tool for its members and to diplomats of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology, based on the EPR-3 asthma guidelines. Asthma-IQ is designed to help clinicians implement the new guidelines, design care plans, and track patient status over time, as well as control healthcare costs. [Link](#)

**CHE-WA Clearinghouse** The Collaborative for Health and the Environment is building a clearinghouse of environmental health training opportunities, presentations, curricula, handouts, brochures, self-study materials and speakers. The site will include opportunities available within Washington state and also online materials from any location. Send information and links if available to [Nancy Snow](#).

**Medscape CMEs** (may require setting up a free account to view):

- [One Third of Asthmatics Use Psychotropic Agents](#)
- [Lung Age May Motivate Smokers to Quit Smoking](#)
- [No Growth Concerns for Toddlers Who Require Long-Term Use of Triamcinolone Spray](#)
- [Cold-Adapted Influenza Vaccine, Trivalent, Generally Well Tolerated in Infants](#)
- [Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence](#)
- [Uncontrolled Asthma Increased Before and After ED Visits](#)
- [Achieving Asthma Control: Recognizing Individual Patient Variability](#)
- [Alternate-Day Aspirin May Reduce Risk for Asthma in Women](#)

## RESEARCH

**Racial Differences in Perception/Reporting of Asthma Symptoms** The first study to demonstrate that there are clinically significant differences in the reporting of asthma symptoms between African Americans and Caucasians, in the *March Journal of Asthma*, found that African Americans were less likely to report nocturnal awakening, dyspnea, and chest pain. Authors stress that culturally sensitive severity scales need to be developed to help eliminate the ethnic disparity in asthma outcomes. [Abstract](#)

**Results from a Large-Scale School Asthma Intervention** A study of a middle school asthma self-management program in California showed high participation and retention among eligible students. The authors concluded that large school districts with incomplete or inadequate health records, high asthma prevalence, and internal or external services available for students with asthma may benefit from a similar model. [Full text](#)

**Depression/Anxiety Linked to Poorer Asthma Control** An analysis of national BRFSS data from published in *Journal of Asthma* indicate that people with asthma are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety than people without asthma. The data also showed that depression and anxiety were tied to increased health risk behaviors and poorer asthma control. Authors recommend a multidimensional approach to asthma care, including possible screening for these conditions. [Abstract](#)

**Personal and Ambient Air Pollution Exposures and Lung Function in Children** A trial measuring exposures to fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in children with asthma found a significant decrease in FEV<sub>1</sub> associated with personal PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>. Findings suggest different sets of causal components related to personal PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, and that associations of lung function with particulate air pollutants might be missed using ambient central-site data alone. [Abstract](#)

**Toxicity of Diesel Exhaust: Implications for Primary Care** This *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* article reviews the current data on the effects of diesel exhaust on lung, cardiovascular, nervous, and reproductive health. Authors recommend primary care physicians question patients on diesel exhaust exposure and be familiar with its symptoms. [Full text](#)

**Tobacco Smoke and Allergic Sensitization** An evaluation of 9,000 children found maternal exposure during pregnancy was linked to sensitization to house dust mite, especially when the mothers were allergic. The study, in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, found a stronger association with prenatal exposure than postnatal. [Abstract](#)

**Medicaid Status and Asthma Outcomes** A study in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* comparing ED visits/hospitalizations and asthma control in Medicaid enrollees with severe asthma to those with private insurance found that associations between Medicaid enrollment status and higher utilization/ poorer asthma control disappeared after adjusting for demographic differences. [Abstract](#)

**Neonatal Antibiotics a Risk Factor for Wheezing** A cohort study published in the April *Pediatrics* found that treatment with antibiotics in the neonatal period was an independent risk factor for wheezing, supporting the hypothesis that an alteration in the intestinal flora can increase the risk of subsequent wheezing. Other risk factors included male gender, gestational age of <37 weeks, having a mother with asthma, having a sibling with asthma or eczema, and breastfeeding for <5 months. [Abstract](#)

**Selective Provision of Asthma Self-Management Tools to Families** In a study of 896 parents of children with asthma published in *Pediatrics*, primary care pediatricians were more likely to provide asthma action plans, a symptom diary, and written instructions on use of a metered-dose inhaler to patients, and forward information to the patients' schools, when the parents had lower education and income. The authors believe this is related to physicians' limited time and recommend improvements in efficiency, referral to community resources, and improved reimbursement for education. [Full text](#)

**Aspirin May Cut Asthma Risk in Women** Results of a large trial published in *Thorax* showed a 10% reduction in women's risk of developing asthma associated with taking 100 milligrams of aspirin every other day in women with a BMI of <30. Researchers emphasize that more studies are needed before aspirin can be recommended solely for this purpose. [Abstract](#)

**Disparities: Expanding The Focus** The March/April issue of *Health Affairs* is devoted to disparities in health. The studies highlight how factors such as social determinants, disparities in the health care system, and the lack of diversity in the health professions coalesce to undermine the quality and fairness of U.S. health and health care. [Link](#)

### ***American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology Conference 2008 Highlights:***

- **[Heartburn Drugs During Pregnancy Raise Asthma Risk](#)** Children born to women who take prescription acid blockers for heartburn during pregnancy are 51% more likely to suffer asthma symptoms such as wheezing and breathing difficulties.
- **[Mouse Allergen Common in Homes, Tied To Asthma](#)** Individuals who are prone to allergies and live in houses with high levels of mouse allergen are almost twice as likely to develop wheeze and other symptoms of asthma as those who live in mouse-free houses. 35% of houses tested had mouse allergen levels that exceeded the typical level of sensitization.
- **[Early Diesel Exhaust Exposure Doubles Asthma Risk](#)** Infants younger than 1 year who live within 400 m of a source of diesel exhaust have twice the risk for persistent allergic wheeze by the age of 3 years than infants who live farther away. If the living environment also has a high risk for indoor allergens, this risk is more than 4 times higher.
- **[Budesonide/Formoterol Safe for Very Young Children With Asthma](#)** A study of children between the ages of 6 and 11 with mild to severe asthma who had been receiving inhaled corticosteroids found corticosteroid/beta-agonist combination inhalation therapy to be effective and safe.
- **[Summer Breaks in Controller Meds Linked to Fall ED Visits](#)** A study supported by GlaxoSmithKline found that asthma patients taking a "holiday" from their controller medications during the summer months were significantly more likely to have asthma-related ED visits in the fall.

### **Other Select Articles:**

[Factors Affecting Pharmacists' Pediatric Asthma Counseling](#) *J Am Pharm Assoc* 2007; 47(6)

[Allergen Skin Tests and Free Ige Levels During Reduction and Cessation of Omalizumab Therapy](#) *Jaci* 2008; 121(2):506-511

[Sputum Eosinophils & Response of Exercise-Induced Bronchoconstriction to Corticosteroid in Asthma](#) *Chest*. 2008; 133:404-411

[Flu Vaccine Can Be Given to Children Together with Other Vaccines](#) *Pediatrics* 2008; 121: 508-516

[Smoking Cessation and Transition Into Retirement](#) *Age Ageing* 2007; 36(6):638-643

[Effect of House Dust Mite Immunotherapy in Asthmatic Children](#) *Annals Allergy* 2008; 100(4):314 - 322

[Management of Asthma in Preschool Children with Ics and Leukotriene Receptor Antagonists](#) *Coaci* 2008;8(2):158-162

[Pharmaceutical Treatment Strategies for Childhood Asthma](#) *Coaci* 2008;8(2):168-176

[Targeting Airway Inflammation in Asthma: Current and Future Therapies](#) *Chest* 2008; 133:989-998

[Asthma Costs and Utilization in a Managed Care Organization](#) *Jaci* 2008; 121(4): 885-892.E5

[Exhaled Malondialdehyde as Marker of Effect of Exposure to Air Pollution in Children with Asthma](#) *Jaci* 2008; 121(4): 903-909.E6

[Behavioral and Cognitive Processes in the Self-Management of Asthma](#) *Journal Of Asthma* 2008; 45(2):81-94

[Frequency and Correlates of Overweight Status in Adolescent Asthma](#) *Journal Of Asthma* 2008; 45(2):135-139

[Impact of Patient-Related Factors on Asthma Control](#) *Journal Of Asthma* 2008; 45(2):109-113

## EVENTS

**National Healthy Schools Day is April 28<sup>th</sup>!** Click [here](#) for more information, local events, and planning tools.

### **Provider Training: Asthma Guidelines & Tobacco Intervention – April 30, Spokane, WA**

Offered by the Spokane Regional Health District and the Spokane County Medical Society, the “Asthma in the Air” training will address the public health implications of maternal smoking, Basic Tobacco Intervention Skills, and the new EPR-3 asthma guidelines. CME available. Available via telehealth statewide. 5:30 – 9pm.

### **Asthma and the Active Child Class - Wednesday, May 7, 2008 – Seattle, WA**

This class is for parents, day care providers and school nurses who care for children with asthma. Topics include medicines, how to keep children with asthma active and the latest and greatest ways to care for a child with asthma. \$15 registration fee; includes Children’s Living With Asthma booklet. 7 to 9 p.m. Scholarships available. [Link](#)

### **May 6, 2008 is World Asthma Day!**

### **Tobacco 101 in the Latino Community – Wenatchee May 14, Centralia May 16**

This free training, offered by the Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers, covers tobacco use in the Latino community and community-based strategies in tobacco control. [Link](#)

### **Asthma-Friendly Schools Webinar - Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 12-1 p.m.**

The *Marketing Asthma-Friendly Schools* webinar will highlight a new CDC toolkit, *Initiating Change: Creating an Asthma-Friendly School*. [Enroll](#) [Questions](#)

### **Social Marketing in Public Health Conference – June 20-21, Clearwater, FL**

This conference, offered by the University of South Florida, includes a training academy prior to the main conference. [Link](#)

### **Summer Institute for Public Health Practice - August 11-15, Seattle, WA**

Offered by the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Topics include Community Behavioral Health, Epidemiology, Geographic Information Systems, Health Communications, and program implementation and management. Discounted early tuition deadline: June 11. [Link](#)

### **The Washington State Department of Health Tobacco Prevention Resource Center will be offering the following trainings ([Link](#)):**

Wednesday, April 30 – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 1* – Shelton  
Monday, May 5 – *The Science of Nicotine Dependence and Treatment* – Spokane  
Wednesday, May 7 – *The Science of Nicotine Dependence and Treatment* – Mt. Vernon  
Thursday, May 8 – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 3* – Renton  
May 9 (Fri) – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 3* – Mt Vernon  
May 9 (Fri) – *The Science of Nicotine Dependence and Treatment* – Vancouver  
Thursday, May 15 – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 2* – Port Hadlock  
Thursday, May 29 – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 2* – Shelton  
Thursday, Jun 5 – *Cutting Edge Youth Development* – Spokane  
Wednesday, Jun 18 – *Interrupting Generational Poverty* – Renton  
Thursday, Jun 26 – *Motivational Interviewing, Level 3* – Shelton  
Monday, Jul 14 – *Collaborative Leadership Training (2 days)* – Lynnwood  
Tuesday, Jul 29 – *Collaborative Leadership Training (2 days)* – Spokane

**Date Change:** The ALAW Indoor Air & Healthy Buildings Workshop, originally scheduled for April 17 – 18 in Seattle, has been rescheduled for November 18 and 19. More details to come.