

Washington State Asthma Program Email Newsletter

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Committee Meetings

WAI Community-Based Activities, April 9, 4-5:30

WAI Data & Surveillance Committee, March 24, 3-4:30

WAI Steering Committee, May 13, 9:30-11:30

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

Clean Air for Kids (Pierce Cty), April 3, 7:30-9am

WAI Planning Retreat:
March 21, 9:30-3:00

Medscape CMEs

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

[Safety of Long-acting Beta-agonists in Asthma: A Review](#)

[New Guidelines Issued for Management of Asthma During Pregnancy](#)

CE available from American Nurse Today (\$15-20 fee):

[Keeping Asthma At Bay: Guidelines highlight ways to help patients control disorder](#)

NEWS

U.S. FDA Requests More Safety Data on Asthma Drugs In January, the Food and Drug Administration asked manufacturers of long-acting beta agonists Advair, Serevent, Foradil, and Symbicort to provide safety information from controlled clinical studies. An advisory panel will review the findings in adults and children, in response to previous panel recommendations for stronger safety warnings on Serevent after reports of deaths in children treated with the drug.

New Asthma Inhaler Approved For Children...A new inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) treatment for children as young as 4 has been approved by the FDA. Schering-Plough's Asmanex Twisthaler was approved 2 years ago as a maintenance treatment in adults and children 12 and up. At half the dose, it is now the first once-a-day, ICS medicine approved for young children.

Commission Will Identify Strategies to Close Health Gaps The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is creating a new coalition to identify nonmedical, evidence-based strategies to improve health. The 2-year, multidisciplinary Commission to Build a Healthier America will study how factors like education, housing, environment, and income relate to behavioral choices and health outcomes. The group will then investigate practical strategies being developed and implemented around the country to strengthen health and close the gap.

Climate Change, Obesity, and Asthma The health effects of climate change will be highlighted during American Public Health Association's National Public Health Week 2008, April 7-13. Warming temperatures related to greenhouse gases are predicted to have significant health effects, including a rise in air pollution-related asthma symptoms. APHA is seeking to connect obesity and climate change solutions. Obesity is linked to poorer asthma control and worse outcomes. The CDC is also considering promoting the "co-benefits" of fighting global warming and obesity-related illnesses. "A simple intervention like walking to school is a climate change intervention, an obesity intervention, a diabetes intervention, a safety intervention," says Dr. Howard Frumkin, director of the CDC's Center for Environmental Health.

Washington State Legislative Updates:

- **Woodstove change out program** funding was continued. The Capital conference budget appropriated \$1.5 million for this program.
- **SSB 6309** requires presale disclosure of greenhouse gas tailpipe emissions of new cars and light duty trucks. Passed; effective beginning model year 2010.
- **SB 6421** requires Medicaid coverage of smoking cessation services if specific funding is provided in the omnibus appropriations act by 6/30. Passed; awaiting signature.
- **SB 6753** reduces the trigger points for calling burn bans for solid fuel burning devices; allows for the calling of a 2nd stage ban without calling a 1st stage. Passed; signed 3/17.
- **HB 1601**, "Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council." Died in Appropriations.
- **HB 2481**, "Establishing a project to improve asthma care for Medicaid-eligible children." Changed to budget proviso; did not pass.
- **HB 2739 & HB 2894** would require seller's disclosure of uncertified wood-burning devices for residential real property transfers. Died in committee.
- **HB 3017** would allow outdoor burning on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays in November in urban growth areas where burning is currently prohibited. Died in Env Health Committee.
- **HB 3167** creates a work group to evaluate environmental health conditions in state office buildings. Died in Rules.
- **SB 6287/HB 2519** prohibits smoking in vehicles when children are present. HB died in Rules; SB was scheduled for vote but didn't make cutoff.
- **SB 6852** requires DOH to create a task force to study mold and toxins in homes and workplaces. Died in Ways & Means.
- **SB 6919** requires establishment of a burning permit program in areas where burning is currently prohibited. Did not receive committee hearing.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Puget Sound Health Alliance (PSHA)

PSHA released its Asthma Clinical Improvement Report in February. With the aim to improve the quality of asthma care in the region, the report summarizes recommendations of a multidisciplinary review team. The four specific areas of focus were 1) Assessment & Monitoring; 2) Patient Education; 3) Environmental Triggers & Comorbid Conditions; and 4) Medications.

The team recommended two performance measures for inclusion in future rounds of Alliance public performance reporting: 1) appropriate use of controller medications; and 2) spirometry use. Additional recommendations were made for stakeholders within each component of care –providers; parents and patients; health plans; purchasers; and policy makers/public health.

The Clinical Improvement Team also made three general recommendations for asthma:

- 1) The Puget Sound Health Alliance and its members should support the WA State Collaborative to Improve Health.
- 2) The Alliance supports a Pay-for-Performance model for meeting medical home and clinical performance measures.
- 3) Plans and purchasers should encourage healthy behaviors among employees/members and evaluate activities.

The report summary is included in this email. For a copy of the full report, click [here](#) and request it in the “comments” section.

FUNDING AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

Health Disparities Achievement Award The American Journal of Health Promotion’s Symbol of H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People through Empowerment) award honors individuals who have worked to promote cultural diversity in health promotion or made significant achievements in serving the health promotion needs of underserved populations. Deadline: April 25, 2008. [Link](#)

Electronic Health Records Grants The Center for Community Health Leadership is offering medical organizations a grant of EHR software and services to facilitate data exchange between area clinicians. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to sharing data to decrease healthcare costs, increase practice efficiency, and improve care delivery. Deadline: April 15, 2008. [Link](#)

E-Health Tool Research & Development Grants Microsoft is requesting proposals for its HealthVault Be Well Fund. Awards are intended to stimulate the research and development of online tools that improve health. Eligible organizations must be either a nonprofit, accredited degree-granting college or university, or a nonprofit research or health institution. Private-sector organizations may partner with these institutions and qualify for the grant. Deadline: May 9, 2008. [Link](#)

Grantmaker Health Partnerships The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is requesting proposals from local grantmakers to fund projects that can significantly improve the health of vulnerable people in their communities. Projects must be new, innovative, collaborative, and community-based. Significant program expansions -- in new regions or populations -- may also be considered. Up to 14 matching grants of between \$200,000 and \$500,000 will be awarded. Deadline: July 8, 2008. [Link](#)

Health Disparities Research Grants The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health will be awarding \$4.5 million through their Elimination of Health Disparities through Translation Research Grants program. Priority topics include healthy homes and communities, climate change, and asthma. Deadline: May 2, 2008. [Link](#)

Patient Safety and Quality Awards The Joint Commission and the National Quality Forum are accepting applications for the 2008 John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Awards, which recognize individuals and health care organizations that are making significant contributions in these areas. Deadline: April 14, 2008. [Link](#)

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Grants EPA Region 10 is soliciting proposals from organizations for \$15,000-\$35,000 to fund IAQ projects that address any of four priority areas: adoption of EPA’s IAQ Tools for Schools program; indoor asthma triggers education/exposure reduction; secondhand smoke education/exposure reduction; general IAQ training/education/outreach. [Link](#)

Electronic Health Records Demo Project The U.S. DHHS new demonstration project offers Medicare incentive payments to small and medium-sized primary care practices who adopt EHR systems to improve care quality and patient safety. Funded communities must demonstrate active collaboration among local stakeholders and be able to recruit 200 physician practices. [Link](#)

RESOURCES

On-line Asthma Guidelines Discussion Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments is hosting an on-line discussion for participants to share new opportunities and challenges related to the EPR-3 Guidelines. A featured discussion around a component of the new Guidelines will be held each week during the month of March. [Link](#)

On-line Asthma Management & Education Program The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America offers a free on-line course based on the updated national asthma guidelines. The 12-module course covers assessment and monitoring, control of environmental factors, pharmacologic management, and patient education. CE credits available. [Link](#)

National Healthy Schools Day Tools National Healthy Schools Day is April 28th. The Healthy Schools Network website offers examples for events, event guidelines, information on past events, and an opportunity to connect with partners. [Link](#)

EPA Asthma Awareness Month Resource For Asthma Awareness Month in May, the EPA offers an event planning kit featuring ideas for activities, media tips, success stories, and more. Events can be publicized on the national website. [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Medical Home Certification A medical home is an essential component of care for people with chronic conditions. The National Committee for Quality Assurance is now offering recognition for practices that serve as a patient-centered medical home. [Link](#)

Patient Data Toolkit The web-based Health Research and Educational Trust Disparities Toolkit is designed to help hospitals, clinics, health plans and others navigate questions about collecting patient data such as race, ethnicity, and primary language. The toolkit covers topics including data collection process, staff training, and community involvement. [Link](#)

Community Air Quality Activities Resource The new EPA "Improving Air Quality in Your Community" website features activities for reducing indoor and outdoor pollution, including diesel engine retrofit programs, improving air quality in local schools, and pollution prevention options for small businesses. The site includes information about project costs and EPA grants. [Link](#)

Green Cleaning in Schools The Healthy Schools Campaign's free, multimedia toolkit "*The Quick & Easy Guide to Green Cleaning in Schools: Five Simple Steps to a Healthy School Environment*" may be ordered on their website [here](#). For other healthy cleaning tools, useful for schools and other environments, contact Laura White at the Department of Health at Laura.White@doh.wa.gov.

Certified Woodstoves List EPA maintains an up-to-date list of certified woodstoves. [Link](#)

RESEARCH

New EPA Children's Environmental Health Report A report summarizing 10 years of EPA children's environmental health studies found that children living close to major roadways in California have a higher risk of asthma; Integrated Pest Management can be effectively implemented in urban areas to reduce both pesticide and allergen triggers; and that community partners play a critical role in informing, implementing, and translating children's environmental health research. [Report](#)

Pediatric Asthma and Development of Atopy The April issue of *Current Opinion in Allergy and Clinical Immunology* features a series of articles on pediatric asthma and development of atopy ([Table of Contents](#)). Among them, a review of recent evidence of long-term outcomes of controller asthma medications in children found inhaled corticosteroids do not alter the natural progression of childhood asthma or halt progressive airway damage in susceptible children. These findings suggest monotherapy with inhaled corticosteroid is the preferred treatment in children with mild to moderate persistent asthma ([Abstract](#)). Another data review found pediatric evidence that the addition of a written action plan to guided self-management education significantly improves outcome. Symptom-based plans were superior to peak flow-based plans in children and adolescents ([Abstract](#)).

Mom's Cleaning Products Tied to Kids' Wheezing A study in the March *European Respiratory Journal* found that young children whose mothers frequently used household chemicals like bleach, disinfectants, glass cleaner, and insect sprays during pregnancy were at increased risk of wheezing. [Abstract](#)

Allergen Levels in Homes and Asthma Status A *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* study examined burden of multiple home allergens and whether increased levels were associated with occupants' asthma status. 51.5% of surveyed homes had at least 6 detectable allergens, and 45.8% had high levels of at least 3 allergens. Among atopic subjects, high allergen burden increased the odds of having asthma symptoms and was also linked to race, income, and housing type. [Abstract](#)

Traffic-Related Air Pollution and Mortality A study in *Environmental Health Perspectives* analyzed the association between long-term exposure to traffic-related air pollution and mortality in a Dutch cohort. Exposure to black smoke, NO₂, sulfur dioxide, and small particulate matter, as well as traffic exposure, were estimated. Respiratory mortality was significantly linked to NO₂ and black smoke. [Abstract](#)

Indoor Smog A new study using EPA data shows a link between "sick building" complaints of upper and lower respiratory, mucosal, and neurological symptoms, and ambient ozone levels. Ozone exposure can be cumulatively greater indoors, where people spend the majority of their day. The number of workers with symptoms increased with outdoor smog levels—even when below the national limit. Polyester air filters were also linked; authors recommend replacing polyester with fiberglass. [Abstract](#)

Respiratory Illness in Childhood and Adult Mortality Risk A study in *Thorax* found that an early life history of bronchitis, pneumonia, or asthma is associated with 57% higher respiratory disease mortality in adulthood and a higher risk of adult respiratory illness, including chronic phlegm, dyspnea, asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. [Full Text](#)

Severe Asthma Unlike Mild Asthma Data from the Severe Asthma Research Program, reported in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, found that people with severe asthma are more likely to show signs of "air trapping" in the lungs and have airway obstruction even after maximal treatment. This suggests that severe asthma may be a different form of the disease. [Abstract](#)

Skin Exposures in the Development of Occupational Asthma An article in *Current Opinion in Allergy & Clinical Immunology* reports that development of isocyanate asthma continues despite reduced airborne exposures and may be tied to skin exposure, even with protective clothing. Authors recommend reduction of both skin and inhalation exposures. [Abstract](#)

Effects of Asthma Education on Children's Use of Acute Care Services A meta-analysis to estimate the effects of pediatric asthma education on hospitalizations, emergency department (ED) visits, and urgent physician visits for asthma found decreases in mean hospitalizations and ED visits. More sessions and more opportunities for interactive learning may produce better outcomes. Authors recommend health plans invest in pediatric asthma education or provider incentives. [Abstract](#)

Evidence Supports Nurse-Delivered Smoking Interventions A meta-analysis suggests that nurse-delivered tobacco cessation counseling is effective in helping patients quit smoking. Review of 42 clinical trials found nurse counseling associated with a significant increase in the likelihood that participants would quit, particularly in hospital settings. Only 3% of patients given no intervention were able to quit smoking, compared with 15 – 20% of those guided by nurses. [Abstract](#)

Hospital-Based Flu Vaccination Could Target High-Risk Children A study published in the February *Pediatrics* found that routine hospital pediatric flu immunization programs could prevent illness among children at highest risk for complications. Data from 42 children's hospitals revealed that almost 1/4 of children hospitalized with influenza and a comorbidity had a previous hospitalization during vaccination season, providing opportunity and access to at-risk pediatric patients. [Abstract](#)

Airway and Systemic Effects of Inhaled Formoterol A *Respiratory Medicine* study assessed the duration of airway bronchodilatory and systemic effects of inhaled formoterol as compared to salbutamol in asthmatic patients. Patients receiving formoterol demonstrated a substantially longer duration of bronchodilation with similar length of systemic effects (increased heart rate, palpitations, and tremors). Additionally, formoterol showed significantly lower systemic effects than salbutamol. [Abstract](#)

Physician Adherence to EPR-2 Prescribing Guidelines A study in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* analyzed 1998-2004 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey data to assess physician adherence to EPR-2 prescribing guidelines. Researchers found that physician use of controller medications had improved, but elderly patients and some racial minorities were significantly less likely to receive adequate care. Overall, physicians were not in adherence with national guidelines. [Abstract](#)

Children's Asthma Medication Use An analysis of U.S. commercial insurance claims data show that 15% of all children were dispensed an asthma-related medication, including many who did not show an asthma diagnosis. Authors recommend increased research to address the pharmacokinetics and safety of these drugs in children. [Abstract](#)

Efficacy Of Sublingual Immunotherapy in the Treatment of Pediatric Allergic Asthma A metaanalysis of 9 clinical trials, published in *Chest*, found a significant reduction in both symptoms and rescue medication use in children with allergic asthma compared with placebo. Previous studies had documented the efficacy and safety of sublingual immunotherapy for rhinitis, but the value of the treatment for asthma was unclear. [Abstract](#)

Other Select Articles:

[Clinical assessment of asthma progression in children and adults](#) (CME offered). *J All Clin Imm*; 2008;121(3):548-557.

[Advances in pediatric asthma in 2007](#). *J All Clin Imm*; 2008;121(3):614-619.

[The relationship between school absence, academic performance, and asthma status](#). *J of School Health*; 2008;78(3):140-148.

[Highlights of the World Allergy Congress, 2007](#). *Medscape Allergy & Clinical Immunology* 2/6/08.

[Near-fatal asthma: Recognition and management](#). *Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine*; 2008;14(1).

[Guidelines management of asthma in a busy urban practice](#). *Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine*; 2008;14(1).

[Long-term repeatability of exhaled breath condensate pH in asthma](#). *Respiratory Medicine*; 2008;102(3):377-381.

[The asthma ED visit: Treating a crisis in the midst of uncontrolled disease](#). *Ann All Asthma Imm*; 2008;100;3:237-243.

[Variability in the diagnosis of occupational asthma & implications for clinical practice](#). *Curr Op All Clin Imm*; 2008;8(2):140-144.

[Natural history of asthma: Persistence versus progression](#). *J Allergy Clin Immunol*; 2008;121(3):607-613.

[Reducing asthma health disparities: Effectiveness of culturally tailored family intervention](#). *J All Clin Imm*; 2008;121(3):665-670.

[Effect of an integrated care pathway on acute asthma/wheeze in children in-hospital](#). *J of Pediatrics*; 2008;152(3):315-320.e2.

[Transition to adulthood: Delays/unmet needs in adolescents/young adults w asthma](#). *J of Pediatrics*; 2008;152(4):471-475.e1.

[Health plan notification/feedback to providers increases filling of preventer meds](#). *Journal of Pediatrics*; 2008;152(4):481-488.

EVENTS

Flood Response Web Conference – March 25, 12:00–1:00

Speakers from the WA State Department of Health and Georgia will present "Tale of Two Floods: The long and short of it for public health practice". This online, interactive session will cover short and long term public health lessons of flood response. [Link](#)

PBS Health Disparities Documentary *Unnatural Causes* is a 4-hour series exploring America's racial and socioeconomic inequities in health. The series sheds light on evidence that work, wealth, neighborhood conditions, and related issues disrupts human health. Airing nationally over four weeks beginning on March 27th. Click [here](#) for local listings.

National Air Quality Conferences – April 6-9, 2008, Portland, OR – [Link](#)

ALAW Indoor Air & Healthy Buildings Workshop – April 17 – 18, Seattle, WA

This workshop offers CE Credits for Day 1. Registration fee is \$100.00. Day 2 is free and CE Credits are not available. [Link](#)

Environmental Health Lecture – April 30, 2008, Seattle, WA

The Institute for Children's Environmental Health continues their 2008 lecture series on April 30, from 6:30-8:00 p.m., with "Economics for the 21st Century: Creating a Collective Vision for a Sustainable Future". [Link](#)

EPA National Asthma Forum – May 1-2, 2008, Washington DC – [Link](#)

ALAW Asthma Walks –May 4, 2008, Seattle & May 17, 2008, Spokane

Registration is open! Form a team, join a team, or pledge. [Link](#)

Association of Asthma Educators Annual Conference – July 18 – 21, San Francisco, CA

Accepting abstracts through April 15. [Link](#)

Air Toxics Summit 2008 – August 4-7, 2008, Boise, Idaho

Hosted by EPA, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Abstracts accepted through April 25. [Link](#)

