

# The Wisconsin Asthma Coalition Partners with Pharmacists

The Wisconsin Asthma Coalition provides tools and resources for pharmacists and other health professionals to assist patients in improving asthma control

by Kristen Grimes, MAOM, CHES and Erika Horstmann, PharmD

**T**he Wisconsin Asthma Coalition (WAC) is comprised of 12 local asthma coalitions and over 265 members working to improve asthma management in Wisconsin. The WAC membership includes physicians and other clinicians, pharmacists, state and local government, advocacy organizations, tribal communities, schools, child care providers and others. Rhonda Yngsdal-Krenz, RRT, NPS, MBA, American Family Children's Hospital, serves as the current chair of WAC. Erika Horstmann, PharmD, director of clinical services for MD Group Hometown Pharmacies, serves as the vice chair.

## WISCONSIN ASTHMA PLAN 2009-2014

In 2009, WAC released the *Wisconsin Asthma Plan 2009-2014*<sup>1</sup> to serve as a blueprint for addressing asthma in Wisconsin. This strategic plan builds on the efforts of a broad range of statewide partners and includes a multifaceted approach. The intent of the plan is to focus on disparately impacted populations in Wisconsin. Activities will be driven by data from the *Burden of Asthma in Wisconsin 2007*.<sup>2</sup> Activities specifically related to pharmacies and asthma medication use include:

**Surveillance, objective C1:** Investigate opportunities, and if feasible, take necessary steps to utilize datasets that capture daily changes in asthma symptoms (e.g. GPS devices in quick relief holsters to assess location, dates and time of use, and symptom diaries).

**Standardized quality care, objective B2:** Implement pharmacy-based tools to improve asthma management.

- Increase use of the *Asthma Care Fax* by pharmacists
- Update the *Asthma Care Fax* as needed

**Standardized quality care, objective B3:** Track aggregate level patient utilization data, including:

- Rescue inhaler use via monitoring refills
- Regular use of controller medications
- Missed scheduled health care provider visits

**Standardized quality care, objective B4:** Develop and disseminate education for health care providers and health care systems on utilization of rescue inhaler refill claims data to identify high-risk patients with asthma.

**Standardized quality care, objective E5:** Work with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin to incorporate the *Asthma Care Fax* into the Wisconsin Pharmacy Quality Collaborative medication therapy management program.

**Standardized quality care, objective G2:** Update and disseminate an annual summary of prescription assistance programs.



VISIT [WWW.CHAWISCONSIN.ORG/WAC.HTM](http://WWW.CHAWISCONSIN.ORG/WAC.HTM) FOR MORE INFORMATION

## ASTHMA TOOLS FOR PHARMACIES

WAC offers a variety of resources for pharmacists working with asthma patients:

**Asthma Care Fax**—Form for patients who excessively use short-acting beta agonists. This one-page form can be personalized to your pharmacy. After a brief assessment, simply complete the form and fax it to the patient's primary care provider.

**Asthma Control Test**—Two tests are available, one for ages 4-11 and one for ages 12 and older to assess if asthma is in control.

**Prescription assistance programs for patients with asthma**—Provides a detailed list of asthma medications and information on the prescription assistance programs to aid in the cost of medications.

**Controlling Asthma in the Home: A Guide for Tenants and Landlords**—A brochure providing basic information on asthma and recommendations for reducing asthma triggers in the home. Available in English, Spanish and Hmong.

## WAC AND THE WISCONSIN PHARMACY QUALITY COLLABORATIVE (WPQC)

WAC supports the WPQC pilot and has collaborated with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) to customize the asthma algorithm in McKesson's RelayHealth, the information technology platform used in the WPQC program. This algorithm, available for Level 2 comprehensive medication reviews, guides the pharmacist in assessing a patient with asthma. It addresses issues, such as medication adherence and device technique, differences between rescue and controller medications, trigger reduction and other common issues. Another valuable Level 2 intervention in WPQC is medication reconciliation for asthma patients being discharged from a hospital or long-term care setting.

In addition to supporting Level 2 type interactions between patients with asthma and pharmacists, WAC fully supports and encourages pharmacists to provide Level 1 type interventions. Examples of Level 1 interventions for people with asthma include:

- Device instruction consultations for inhalers, nasal sprays and nebulizers
- Adherence consultations emphasizing the importance of daily controller therapy and rescue therapy
- Cost effectiveness interventions to help patients afford the medication they need to improve asthma-related symptoms
- Medication additions/deletions or dose/form changes for patients exhibiting uncontrolled asthma symptoms

## Cause for Concern

- Lifetime asthma prevalence has reached an all-time high of 13 percent in Wisconsin children and adults.
- Over 111,000 Wisconsin children live with asthma, a leading cause of childhood hospitalizations.
- Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism.
- Of adults with asthma, 5-14 percent have work-related asthma.
- African Americans have the highest prevalence of asthma, are hospitalized at five times the rate of whites and have 3.5 times higher rate of asthma mortality.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

Membership in WAC is free and open to any individual or organization interested in asthma prevention, education and management.

Pharmacists can:

- Partner with an existing local asthma coalition or use the local asthma coalition toolkit to start a new coalition in your community
- Network with other asthma experts at our semiannual WAC meetings
- Join a workgroup (e.g. clinical care, education, enhanced covered services) to implement activities from the *Wisconsin Asthma Plan, 2009-2014*

WAC local asthma coalitions endorse WAC's vision and mission and have adopted the Wisconsin Asthma Plan. WAC local asthma coalitions are currently located in the Fox Valley and Chippewa, Dane, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, Wood and Trempealeau counties.

*Your Dose of Oxygen* is an electronic newsletter featuring WAC activities, educational programs, research articles, grants and more.

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin (Alliance), affiliated with Children's Hospital and Health System, leads and manages WAC. The Alliance is a statewide voice for children's health. The Alliance brings people together to influence public policy, raise awareness and promote best practices. The Alliance works to improve the health of Wisconsin children.

For more information, contact Kristen Grimes at (414) 292-4001 or [kgrimes@chw.org](mailto:kgrimes@chw.org). Visit the WAC Web page at [www.chawisconsin.org/wac.htm](http://www.chawisconsin.org/wac.htm) for additional resources. ●

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## REFERENCES

1. Wisconsin Asthma Coalition. (2009). Wisconsin Asthma Plan, 2009-2014. [Online]. Available: [http://www.chawisconsin.org/documents/WACPlan2009.2014\\_000.pdf](http://www.chawisconsin.org/documents/WACPlan2009.2014_000.pdf).
2. Burden of Asthma in Wisconsin 2007. [http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/ch/Asthma/pdf/BOAWI\\_2007%2010-8-08.pdf](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/ch/Asthma/pdf/BOAWI_2007%2010-8-08.pdf)



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