



MACCHE



THE HSC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
Health Services for Children  
Health Services for Children  
with Special Needs, Inc.  
(NET)



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:30 a.m. on May 7, 2009**

Event Date: May 7, 2009

World Asthma Day: May 5, 2009

**Contact:**

Lisa A. Gilmore, 202-415-1962

[lisa.a.gilmore@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.a.gilmore@verizon.net)

## **World Asthma Day Education Forum Emphasizes Need for Asthma Control**

*Collaborative quality improvement initiatives promote guidelines-based asthma care*

**Washington, D.C.**—The growing problem of asthma among residents of the District of Columbia (DC) brought together federal and state officials, healthcare providers, educators, and community partners in a dynamic program to review the latest evidence-based asthma care guidelines and to discuss new collaborative initiatives at national, state, and community levels to improve asthma outcomes. In DC, asthma affects more than one in ten children under 18 years of age and nearly the same proportion of adults. The DC Department of Health estimates that at least 40,000 adults and 13,000 children in DC currently have asthma. Successful implementation of the asthma guidelines can improve asthma morbidity and quality of life for individuals with asthma and has the potential to reduce asthma-related health disparities and healthcare costs.

“Putting evidence-based asthma care into action ultimately depends on a partnership between the research community and primary care physicians to incorporate into daily clinical practice the recommendations put forth in the guidelines for diagnosing and managing asthma” stated James P. Kiley, PhD, Director, Division of Lung Diseases, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Health, “Today’s dialogue about the National Asthma Control Initiative is exciting because it brings together practitioners, payors, and policymakers alike to accelerate the reach and the pace of this partnership.”

Danny Bellamy, Chief Operating Officer of HSCSN, one of DC’s four Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs), added, “We believe in working collaboratively with our MCO colleagues, government partners, provider networks, and members to offer state-of-the-art care. That is why we are delighted to co-sponsor this event and to provide NHLBI’s *Expert Panel Report 3 (EPR-3): Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma - Summary Report 2007* to participants.” Mr. Bellamy also presented an *Asthma Stars Recognition Award* to the United Planning Organization for integrating staff training and family education on asthma within its childcare programs.

The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children’s Health and the Environment (MACCHE), affiliated with The George Washington University and Children’s National Medical Center, joined HSCSN in co-sponsoring the learning activity. Speaking at the event, Janice Lewis, an Environmental Scientist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 3 and Aurora O. Amoah, a Research Scientist at MACCHE, described the two-year collaborative grant EPA Region 3 recently awarded to MACCHE for a *Healthy Asthma Homes Project* to address DC’s high rate of pediatric asthma emergency department visits. Through this comprehensive program, experts work with families to reduce exposure to asthma triggers in the home environment and to educate them on asthma self-management, both key strategies recommended by the asthma guidelines to improve asthma control and related outcomes.

Furthermore, the event highlighted new quality improvement collaboratives within the District of Columbia that aim to apply guidelines-based interventions to improve asthma outcomes:

- **The DC Medicaid and Alliance Health Care Quality Improvement Collaboratives** represent a partnership of the Department of Health Care Finance, DC's Medicaid Agency, with key leadership and health care quality improvement experts from the DC Department of Health; The George Washington University; DC Chartered Health Plan, Inc.; Health Right, Inc.; Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc.; and Unison Health Plan of the Capital Area, Inc. to improve the health of some of the District of Columbia's most vulnerable residents. In 2009-2011, the collaborative quality improvement initiatives will focus on birth and chronic illness outcomes, including emergency department visits and hospital admissions by individuals diagnosed with asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, and congestive heart failure.
- **The Childhood Asthma Quality Improvement Collaborative** is a pilot program of the District of Columbia Partnership to Improve Children's Health Care Quality (DC PICHQ), a regional improvement partnership of public and private healthcare providers housed at The Goldberg Center for Community Pediatric Health at Children's National Medical Center. The DC PICHQ offers an organizational and city-wide infrastructure to plan and implement projects that improve health services and outcomes for DC children. With a grant from the DC Department of Health's Community Health Administration, the DC PICHQ's *Childhood Asthma Quality Improvement Collaborative* aims to achieve a "perfect care bundle" to put the asthma guidelines into practice among a group of pediatric primary care providers in DC.

Additional collaborative projects include the guidelines-based **DC Asthma Action Plan (DC AAP)** approved by the DC Department of Health as the valid medication action plan to allow students in DC public, private, and parochial schools to carry and self-administer, or to be administered by certified staff, emergency asthma and anaphylaxis medication per the *Student Access to Treatment Act of 2007*. National asthma guidelines recommend that all children and adults with asthma have a written asthma action plan, developed jointly with their healthcare provider. For the DC AAP, new *DC Guide to Good Asthma Care* brochure, and other tools and links, visit [www.dcasthma.org](http://www.dcasthma.org).

###

**The Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE)** is one of 11 pediatric environmental health specialty units in the nation. Its mandate is to create awareness and educate health care providers and the general public on environmental issues that affect children in EPA Region 3 (Delaware, DC, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia). It is a joint effort of George Washington University (GWU) and Children's National Medical Center, and is based in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, GWU School of Public Health and Health Services. MACCHE is funded by the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics through a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3. Visit [www.health-e-kids.org](http://www.health-e-kids.org).

**Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc. (HSCSN)** is an innovative care management network coordinating health, social, and education services for the pediatric Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and SSI-eligible populations of Washington, DC. Benefits to members and their families include traditional Medicaid benefits plus an array of expanded health care and wrap-around services. HSCSN has a sister organization, The HSC Pediatric Center, formerly The Hospital for Sick Children, and a parent organization, The HSC Foundation. Visit [www.hscsn-net.org](http://www.hscsn-net.org).