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**RESPIRATORY  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION<sup>SM</sup>**  
*of Metropolitan Chicago*

**For Immediate Release**  
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**CITYWIDE COALITION URGES  
ASTHMA EDUCATION  
FOR COACHES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

*412,000 area children at risk for asthma emergencies*

Sixty-four percent of coaches and physical education teachers in the Chicago area have not been trained to handle asthma emergencies putting an estimated 412,000 Cook County children with asthma or asthma symptoms at risk according to a survey from the Chicago Asthma Consortium.

The Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago and a coalition of physicians, asthma specialists, and school and park district officials released the 2007 Asthma Action Plan for Chicago calling for more asthma education and asthma emergency training for all gym teachers, volunteer and part-time coaches.

“More than half of all children with asthma in Chicago had a severe asthma attack in the past year and nearly one-third had an asthma attack in which they thought their life was in danger,” says Coalition Chair, Dr. Jay Shannon, Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at Stroger Hospital, “Coaches must be able to recognize asthma symptoms and handle asthma emergencies.”

The Coalition commemorated May 1 as World Asthma Day by issuing a series of recommendations calling for healthcare and prescription drug coverage for all Illinois residents.

Chicago has as one of the highest rates of asthma and asthma fatalities in the country. Asthma is a primary cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness.

The 206,000 Cook County children diagnosed with asthma is thought to be half of the estimated 412,000 who have asthma symptoms. All Illinois students in kindergarten through tenth grade are required to take physical education classes. Many take to area baseball, football and soccer fields in programs supervised by an estimate 2100 full, part-time or volunteer coaches.

In some Chicago communities the asthma hospitalization rate is nearly double the national average, and the mortality rate for African American and Latino populations is five times higher than whites. Coaches can obtain free asthma education on-line through Winning With Asthma, a 30-minute web-based program at [www.winingwithasthma.org](http://www.winingwithasthma.org) or in person by signing up for asthma training classes at the Respiratory Association of Metropolitan Chicago, 1440 W. Washington call 312-243-2000 or click on [www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org).

Chicago's Lung Health  
Leader Since 1906

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Representatives from Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, Illinois High and National Asthma Foundation and Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago joined 27 other groups at Whitney Young High School, 211 N. Laflin Ave to announce the initiative.

The educational activities are funded through an educational grant from the Chicago Asthma Consortium.

The Fourth Annual Chicago Asthma Action Plan and participating organizations can be viewed at [www.asthmaactionplanchicago.org](http://www.asthmaactionplanchicago.org)