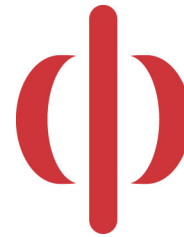


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**RESPIRATORY  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION<sup>SM</sup>**  
*of Metropolitan Chicago*

For Immediate Release  
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## **New Coalition Introduces State Plan; Targets COPD Illinois State Plan Aimed at the 4<sup>th</sup> Leading Cause of Death**

*Strategic action plan to be announced May 1 at Thompson Center*

On May 1 the Illinois COPD Coalition—convened by Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago—will make Illinois only the second state in the US to introduce and begin implementing a plan designed to address COPD.

The new plan seeks to stem the growth in new cases, reduce mortality rates, and improve the quality of life for the more than 500,000 Illinois residents currently living with the serious lung disease, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

“Of the top five leading causes of death, COPD is the only one on the rise. This plan gives COPD the attention it deserves. Our goal is to increase public awareness and do more to combat COPD in Illinois,” said RHAMC President and CEO, Joel Africk.

In addition, the Plan looks to: increase access to therapies like pulmonary rehabilitation, and when necessary, home oxygen care; and increase funding and resources at the state level and recommends the development of a statewide COPD resource network.

Joining the Coalition in introducing this new effort, will be Dr. James P. Kiley, Director of the Division of Lung Diseases at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and patient advocate Grace Anne Dorney Koppel.

“NHLBI is committed to COPD education and research. We are pleased to be a partner in this new effort as we bring our national COPD Learn More Breathe Better program to Illinois, where RHAMC and the Coalition plan to use our educational materials in their general public and healthcare provider outreach,” said Kiley.

COPD is an under-recognized and under-diagnosed disease with an estimated 12 million Americans currently living with the disease, and another 12 million who have it and don't know it. In people who have COPD, the airways—tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs—are partly blocked, which makes it hard to get air in and out. Symptoms include “smokers cough”, shortness of breath, feeling like you can't catch your breath, or wheezing.

Chicago's Lung Health  
Leader Since 1906

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"If you are diagnosed with COPD, seek out the best doctor you can find and get treated. And by all means if you smoke, stop," advises Grace Anne Dorney Koppel. "Life with COPD can be very good if treated aggressively through medication and pulmonary rehabilitation. Better yet, catch COPD early, before it progresses if you have ever been a smoker or worked in occupations in which you were exposed to lung irritants. Get a breathing test. It may be the most important test you've ever taken."

Koppel, Kiley and a number of other experts will be on hand to explain the plan and the state of COPD in Illinois, and the importance of a State Plan including:

- **Jeffrey Glassroth, MD**—Illinois COPD State Plan Chair and Vice Dean & Chief Academic Officer, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University
- **Terry Mason, MD**—Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health
- **David Goldberg, MD**—Director, Section of Preventive Medicine, Cook County Bureau of Health Services
- **Joel Africk**—President and Chief Executive Officer, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago

The Illinois COPD State Plan will be released during a news conference on May 1, 2008, at 10AM at the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W Randolph St., 15<sup>th</sup> floor, Chicago.

For more information about the Illinois COPD state plan or for a copy of the executive summary—once the plan is released, please visit [www.copdillinois.org](http://www.copdillinois.org).

For information on NHLBI's COPD Learn More Breathe Better initiative visit, [www.learnaboutcopd.org](http://www.learnaboutcopd.org).

Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) has been a local public health leader since 1906. Today, the Association fights lung disease and promotes healthy lungs by supporting research, advocacy, and educational efforts on behalf of individuals and families affected by lung cancer, asthma, COPD (chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and other lung diseases.. For more information, please visit [www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org).

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