

Challenge

Winter 2005

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\$2-Million Merck Childhood Asthma Network Grant Awarded to American Lung Association

The American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago has been awarded a four-year \$2 million grant from the Merck Company Foundation to address the high incidence of pediatric asthma in Chicago's Englewood community. The grant, one of the largest given to a voluntary health agency in Chicago on the issue of asthma, will provide education, interventions in schools and families, and increased access to medical care to an area where half the children live below the poverty level.

"We are deeply honored to be the recipient of this generous grant," says Joel Africk, CEO, ALAMC. "The award is a testament to the effectiveness of our asthma program, the hard work of community partners and the commitment of our asthma professionals who have been serving areas of need for many years."

Principal investigators for the grant, Asthma Action Plan for Chicago: Addressing Asthma in Englewood, are Rhonda Williams, MES, of the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago and Dr. Victoria Persky, University of Illinois at Chicago, in collaboration with twenty community partner organizations.

The project aims to create a community model to reduce pediatric asthma morbidity that can be used in urban areas around the country. Asthma-related hospitalizations in Englewood and West Englewood are among the highest in Chicago—more than double the City's average. Illinois has the highest death rate among African Americans (per 2002 data). To learn more about the project, view the grant abstract on www.lungchicago.org or call the Association at 312.243.2000.

smoke-free
CHICAGO

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Message from the CEO

JOEL J. AFRICK
Chief Executive Officer

The past three months at the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago have been exciting and rewarding.

In early November, we learned that ALA of Metropolitan Chicago had been awarded a \$2 million four-year grant by The Merck Corporation to conduct a pediatric asthma program in Chicago's Englewood community, an urban community plagued by asthma. Competition for this grant was severe. The Merck Company's Foundation received over 160 applications from all over the country. Our proposal, in which we work with partners including Co-Principal Investigator Victoria Persky, MD, at the University of Illinois at Chicago and local hospitals, clinics, social service agencies, non-profit organizations and healthcare agencies was one of five winning proposals selected nationwide. Our work began on December 1. Special congratulations to Rhonda Williams, our Deputy Director of Programs and Policy, and Rhonda's exceptional team of talented professionals.

At the same time, we entered the final stages of our Smoke-free Chicago

campaign, our effort to make all work places in Chicago smoke-free. Our efforts have been made difficult by the unwillingness of some Chicago aldermen to accept the notion that all workers should be protected from secondhand smoke. We have faced intense efforts to strike a "compromise" under which some workers would continue to be exposed to second hand smoke. We simply can't do that. New York City, Boston, and hundreds of other cities protect all workers from this toxic carcinogen, and we can't accept the concept that some of Chicago's workers do not deserve the same protections as workers in other cities.

If the Smoke-free Chicago campaign is still underway when you receive this issue of the Challenge, please call your alderman or Mayor Daley immediately, and ask them to protect all workers across the board.

Finally, as the holidays approach, and we all take time to reflect on the year that is coming to an end, please accept my best wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year. Thank you for everything you do to help us succeed in achieving our mission of improving life, one breath at a time.

Joel Africk

Five Minutes Away from Death, Miracle Man Tackles the Hancock

Gloria Jiskra heard the panic in her daughter's voice. "Come home, something's wrong with Dad." Rushing home, she found her husband's fingernails and eyeballs turning blue. After a hurried trip to the hospital, doctors declared both lungs collapsed and put him in a coma to arrest his declining health.

In the months following a diagnosis of acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)—an inflammation of the lungs and an accumulation of fluid in the air sacs—Don lost 80% his muscle.

He remembers sitting in a wheelchair about to start rehab, "staring at a blank wall wondering if I would ever walk again."

He began with water therapy and electronic stimulation, then turned to stair climbing—one step at a time, "A single step was the hardest thing I've ever done." After six months of physical therapy, Don switched to a Stairmaster.

"I was five minutes away from death," Don recalls. Now 9 years later, he's a robust 74-year-old who's ready for his greatest challenge: Big John, a 94-story climb up the famed John Hancock Center.



Don Jiskra training for OfficeMax Hustle up the Hancock.

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Initiative Offers Information, Hope to Lung Cancer Patients



Cancer survivor David Asplund (center)

David Asplund makes every day count. It's a philosophy he adopted nearly two years ago when he was first diagnosed with lung cancer. "I was pretty far along, when they found it—a level 3B. I thought I was at death's door"

His lung cancer was detected as a result of a boating accident which required him to get a chest scan.

David was surprised to discover he had lung cancer because he had quit smoking 15 years earlier. "I owe everything to my doctors and the aggressive treatment they recommended."

David also considers himself fortunate: nearly 6,700 Illinois residents die of lung cancer annually. After doctors removed two-thirds of his lungs, and chemotherapy and radiation therapy, he is now cancer free.

He attributes his positive attitude to support he received from his mentors and doctors. As a result, he's helping others through his role as an advocate on the Lung Cancer Initiative launched by the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago earlier this year.

The Advisory Council is made up of physicians, nurses, social workers, researchers, patient support and advocacy organizations, and those affected by lung cancer such as David, to help develop and guide the new Initiative's education and advocacy activities. The initiative seeks to help keep those in Cook County informed on key issues and research progress regarding lung cancer.

One of the first educational steps is the development of a brochure which explains risk factors for lung cancer, its signs and symptoms, and steps one can take to reduce an individual's risk. The Council is also working on increasing awareness through provider and community education.

Meanwhile, David continues regular check-ups with his doctor and his work with ALAMC. "I want to help others focus on the positive, and maintain a healthy lifestyle."

To find out more about the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago's Lung Cancer Initiative, visit www.lungchicago.org or call 312.243.2000.

Few School Districts Limit School Bus Idling

A recent survey of school districts in the Chicago regional area conducted by the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago found that less than 10% of the more than 300 school districts surveyed have guidelines limiting school bus idling.

Although school buses remain the safest way to get to school, asthma experts worry children may be breathing too much diesel exhaust. Diesel fuel, which contains 40 toxic chemicals, is a common asthma trigger.



"A no-idling policy is a simple and effective way to reduce harmful pollution around schools and reduce children's exposure to diesel emissions," says Renate Anderson, Environmental Health Associate of the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

Chicago has one of the highest incidences of asthma in the nation with as many as one in four children living with the disease in some neighborhoods. Asthma is also the primary cause of school absences due to a chronic medical condition.

ALAMC has launched a program to encourage school districts to adopt strict idling standards. "Reducing idling time not only reduces emissions but cuts operating costs," said Anderson. The U.S. EPA estimates that for every hour a typical school bus idles, it consumes one-half gallon of diesel fuel.

For more information on how to implement a no-idling policy in your school district, go to lungchicago.org or call 312.243.2000.



Interactions Q&A

WITH DR NEIL SCHACHTER

Dr Schachter is a consultant to the American Lung Association and the author of The Good Doctor's Guide to Colds and Flu

AVIAN FLU: It's Time to Be Prepared



Should I be worried about Avian Flu?

Avian Flu is a type of influenza virus that normally infects just birds. Doctors are very concerned that the virus which normally infects birds could mutate in such a way to cause severe, widespread disease in humans. Only a few people contracted this type of influenza but more than 50% of those have died. As a point of comparison, during the great influenza epidemic of 1918 the flu mortality was 2%.

What are the symptoms of Avian Flu?

Early symptoms include a high fever of 102 or higher, severe diarrhea, and a cough. Shortness of breath, bloody sputum and rapid breathing soon develop. Within a few days most patients show signs of a viral pneumonia. Severe respiratory distress often develops within a

week. Frequently there is multiple organ shutdown including kidney and heart failure.

Will an epidemic really happen?

Unfortunately, the elements of a severe world wide pandemic seem to have come together. We also know that when an animal virus becomes a danger to humans it tends to produce extremely severe disease. Recent studies have now shown that the 1918 influenza epidemic came from a type of bird flu.

Is there a vaccine?

It will probably be 1–2 years before we'll see a safe and effective vaccine for widespread use. Since we barely have the capacity to produce half of what we need in the U.S. each year, we certainly don't have the capacity to produce sufficient quantities of the new vaccine for bird flu.

Is there a cure?

We don't have a cure for people already sick with flu, but anti-viral such as Tamiflu and Relenza can block viral replication lessening the flu's severity. Unlike in the 1918 epidemic, we also have mechanical support to assist breathing in respiratory failure and antibiotics to deal with bacterial pneumonias which also tend to develop with Avian Flu.

Since the current vaccine does not protect against Avian Flu, do I still need to get a flu shot?

Absolutely. The Avian Flu is not here yet and may never arrive, but the annual flu season has started. Keep in mind that each year the flu sickens up to 60 million Americans and is fatal to 36,000 adults and children. We should be concerned about the prospect of avian flu in the years to come, but we should not ignore the flu season at our doorstep.



GET THE LATEST NEWS & INFORMATION ABOUT CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)

To sign up for the quarterly Inspiration newsletter, contact Meghan Mahan at mmahan@alamc.org





Remember the American Lung Association in Your Will

To learn more about specific types of planned gifts—including bequests, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, retirement funds, charitable trusts, and others, contact donationinformation@alamc.org

In the News

Cheek Cells and Lung Cancer

A study presented at the 2005 meeting of American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) found that analysis of cells scraped from the inner part of the cheek may be a simple and inexpensive screening method for patients at risk for lung cancer. Researchers stress that additional clinical testing is needed, but if proven to be an effective method for detecting stage 1 lung cancer, it could decrease the mortality rate.

Asthma Patients' Emergency Room Visits Avoidable

A new survey announced at 2005 ACAAI conference shows asthma-treating physicians believe that 60-70% of emergency room visits of mild to moderate asthma patients, and more than 50% of visits of severe asthma patients, could have been prevented with better disease management.

With an individualized medication strategy and better disease education, surveyed doctors believe that most asthma sufferers should be able to enjoy the same quality of life as people without the disease.

Eating Burgers

May Double Asthma Risk

A study conducted in Auckland, New Zealand and published in the journal *Allergy*, shows school children who ate hamburgers and fast-food more than twice a week were 75% more likely to have asthma and nearly 100% more likely to experience wheezing.

Dr. Kristen Wickens, who led the study, says that the high salt content in these foods may increase the risk of respiratory symptoms.

Critics of the study say that more research is needed and socio-economic factors and obesity need to be explored.

Study Shows Some Industry Workers at Risk for COPD

A new study found that 19 percent of COPD cases in the U.S. is caused by poor air quality associated with specific industries. Manufacturing of rubber, plastics, leather, textile mill products, and food were named as industries where workers have a higher tendency of COPD, along with agriculture and construction.

Over 20 million workers in the U.S. are exposed to gases, vapors, fumes and dusts that can cause COPD.

Study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

For more information, please email Meghan Mahan at mmahan@alamc.org.

Air Cleaners May Be Hazardous to Your Health

Experts hired by the American Lung Association have found that some of the nation's most popular air cleaning devices are ineffective in removing common allergens and may produce excessive ozone, a gas linked to premature death, weakened lung function, coughs and asthma attacks.

"People are increasingly turning to air cleaning devices in the hopes of purifying the air inside their homes," said Maureen Damitz, Director of Community Education, "Unfortunately, not only are some air cleaners ineffective, they are hazardous to your health because they produce too much ozone. And, when ozone is combined with pine- or lemon-scented cleaning products, it can produce formaldehyde, a carcinogen that can settle in beds and carpets."

The report, which corroborates similar findings from Consumer Reports, was conducted by Richard Shaughnessy, PhD, of the University of Tulsa, a recognized expert in the field.

Ionizing air cleaners including the top-selling Sharper Image Ionic Series were criticized in both reports as producing excessive amounts of ozone and failing to remove common allergens from the air. The American Lung Association advocates the use of HEPA filters but first suggests eliminating common sources of indoor air pollutants such as pets, mold and mildew, radon, fuel burning, cigarettes and dust mites.

For more information on indoor air pollution or the selection of an air cleaning device click on www.lungusa.org or call Maureen Damitz at 312.243.2000.

Tobacco Education Takes to the Air

Last year, we and other nonprofits supported the Illinois Attorney General's position in suing the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company for violating the multi-state Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement by marketing cigarettes to urban youth. Although it admitted no guilt, RJ Reynolds agreed to make sweeping marketing changes and to pay \$1.5 million to support tobacco education programs. ALAMC received \$150,000 from the settlement and chose to air a series of innovative radio ads and conduct a community outreach program to remind kids about the dangers of smoking.



We thought personal stories told in a child's voice could make the greatest impact on young radio listeners, so we asked Radio Disney and WGCI to host a contest that invited Chicago area youth to submit their personal stories of being around tobacco. The stories were touching: some discussed the loss of a loved one, others talked about living with a smoker.

From 200 stories we turned six into thirty-second radio spots which are being broadcast mid-November through mid-December on WGCI-FM at 107.5 and Radio Disney AM 1300. We also developed a tobacco education script for Radio Disney for use when presenting live shows at schools and public venues around the city.

Misdiagnosis: A Common Issue for Asthma and COPD Patients

Physicians often misdiagnose asthma and COPD because the symptoms are very similar. An incorrect diagnosis can result in delayed or ineffective treatment. Shortness of breath, a productive cough, wheezing, chest tightness and an inability to carry out daily activities are signs of both asthma and COPD.

Spirometry, a simple, noninvasive 'breathing' test is an easy and effective way to identify disease. The underutilization of spirometry by many family practitioners can easily lead to misdiagnosis of disease and incorrect prescriptions that are ineffective treatments.

Asthma, which often runs in families, is associated with young non-smokers and allows a reversal of airway restriction. During an asthma attack, medication relaxes the restriction, allowing air to flow. It is not curable, but asthma can be controlled.

COPD on the other hand is associated with adults and caused by smoking in 80–90% of the cases. COPD causes permanent loss of airway elasticity and destruction of air sacs.

Elderly patients are particularly susceptible to misdiagnosis because respiratory problems can be mistakenly attributed to the natural process of aging. Although rare, the manifestations of asthma can occur after 65. In these cases, symptoms are often misdiagnosed as COPD.

It is important to ensure your lung disease is correctly diagnosed and treated promptly. To help in that effort, ALAMC has partnered with 80 Walgreens stores to administer free lung tests at stores throughout Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Will and McHenry counties. For more information and to find a location near you, visit www.lungchicago.org.



Free Lung Test Schedule at Participating Walgreens Stores

Monday, January 16

7960 W. 159th St.
Orland Park
9 am - 1 pm

Saturday, January 21

16675 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park
10 am - 2 pm

Tuesday, January 24

6430 W. 111th St.
Worth
9 am - 1 pm

Tuesday, January 17

7960 W. 159th St.
Orland Park
9 am - 1 pm

Monday, January 23

13501 S. Cicero Ave.
Crestwood
2 pm - 6 pm

Wednesday, January 25

6430 W. 111th St.
Worth
9 am - 1 pm

Friday, January 20

16675 S. Oak Park Ave.
Tinley Park
2 pm - 6 pm

ALAMC will Focus on Low-Emission Vehicles at First Look for Charity

When you purchase your ticket to First Look for Charity from the American Lung Association, you'll enjoy more than a delightful evening, delicious hors d'oeuvres and a preview of the 2006 Chicago Auto Show. You can explore cutting-edge technology for cleaner running cars.

This year we're delighted to have Dr. Said Al-Hallaj of the Illinois Institute-of Technology as ALAMC's Honorary Chair of the event. As coordinator of IIT's Renewable Energy Programs, Dr. Al-Hallaj reminds us that mass-produced non-polluting, renewable energy vehicles are just around the corner. Indeed, both electric-powered and hydrogen-powered technology lent by IIT will be on display at the American Lung Association's VIP reception. We also encourage you to visit the 2006 low-emission cars that are leading the way for a cleaner, healthier environment.



First Look for Charity is February 9, 2006 at McCormick Place. Tickets for the black-tie event are \$200 and you can purchase them today—by telephone or online—at the American Lung Association of Metropolitan

Chicago. Call 312.243.2000 for more information. Your donation will help us find a cure for asthma, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases. This event benefits American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago and 18 other Chicagoland charities.

First Look for Charity and the Chicago Auto Show are presented by the new-car dealers of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana, who form the Chicago Automobile Association.



Payroll Deductions Can Help Health

You might have noticed the Community Health Charities logo which appears on the back of each issue of Challenge. As the name implies, CHC is a community health organization that allows employees of virtually any organization to support ALAMC and 38 other area health agencies through payroll deductions.

The mission of Community Health Charities is to provide every employee the opportunity to support medical research, health education and patient services through charitable giving in the workplace. From childhood cancer to Alzheimer's, CHC's member agencies are making a difference in people's lives every day.

As the workplace giving campaign season approaches, you may be invited to make a payroll contribution. If so, remember to designate the American Lung Association as your preferred charity by using code number 5510 on the Community Health Charities pledge form. If your employer offers only a United Way campaign, you can write-in the American Lung Association on your pledge form through their Donor Choice Options. Speak to your Human Resources representative for specific instructions on how to indicate your choice. If your workplace does not offer a workplace giving program, contact the American Lung Association or Community Health Charities about setting up a program today!

The American Lung Association is proud to be a founding member of Community Health Charities, the largest workplace giving program dedicated solely to health causes.



Christmas Seals

As you make your year-end giving decisions, we ask that you consider contributing to the Christmas Seal campaign and help others breathe easier. By donating whatever amount you can afford, whether \$100 by check, a gift of securities, or increasing your annual contribution, you become an integral part of our important mission, to prevent lung disease and promote lung health in the metropolitan Chicago region. Please send your Christmas Seal contribution today!

Challenge

Challenge is published by the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago, 1440 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, Illinois 60607 312.243.2000 www.lungchicago.org

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