

Building community capacity in Environmental Health: The Community Action against Asthma example Detroit, Michigan

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CAAA Combines Three Research Projects and uses a CBPR approach

Household Intervention

To reduce environmental triggers
For asthma

Exposure and Health Effects

Assessment- To assess
separate & possible interaction
effects of outdoor and indoor
air quality on exacerbation of
asthma in children

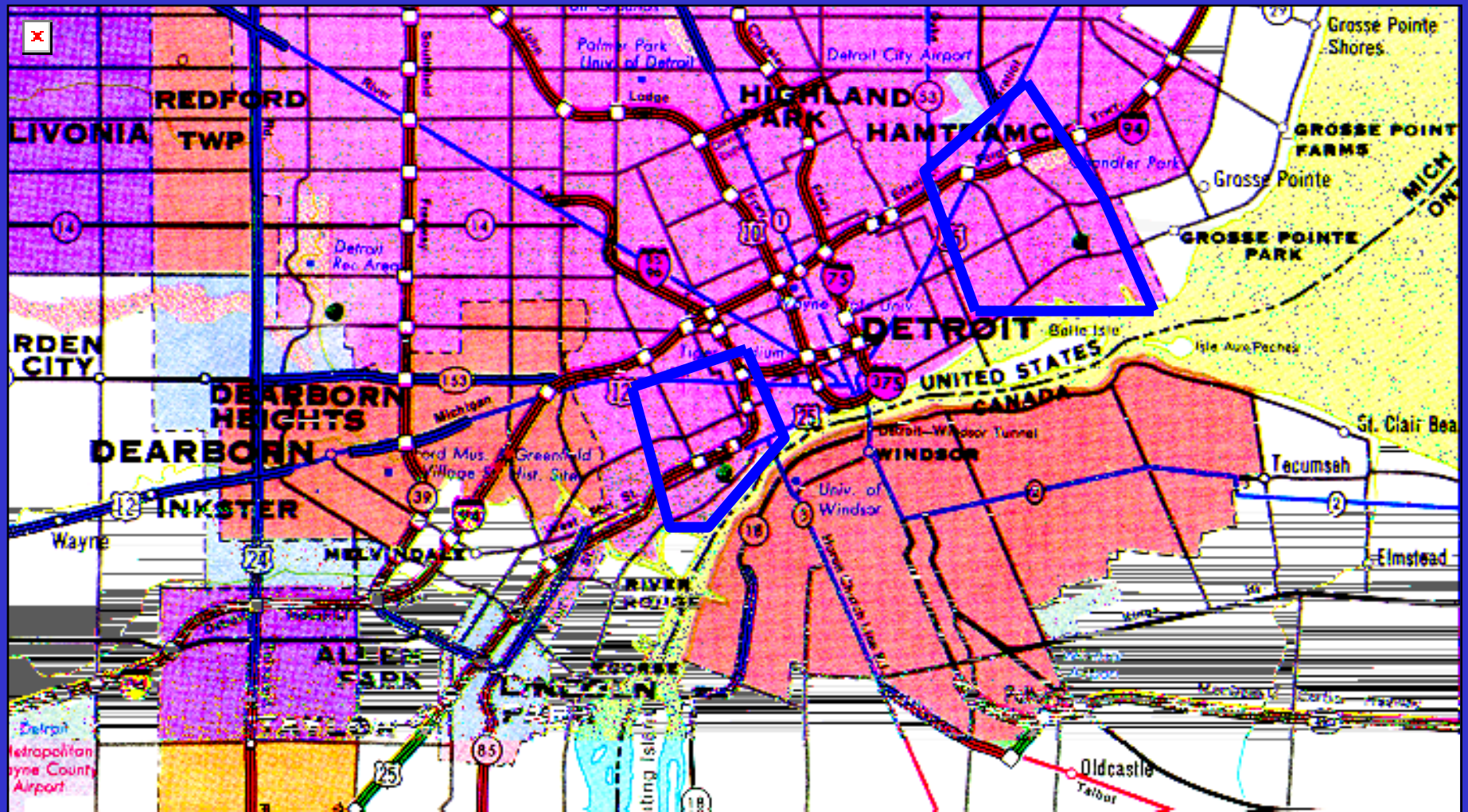
Community
Action
Against
Asthma

Community Organizing for
Environmental Health
(CONEH)- community-
neighborhood intervention

Community Action Against Asthma –

- UM School of Public Health
- UM School of Medicine
- Detroit Health Department
- Community Health & Social Services Center
- Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
- Friends of Parkside
- Latino Family Services
- Warren/Conner Development Coalition
- Henry Ford Health System
- Michigan Department of Agriculture, Plant and Pest Management Division

URC Detroit Communities



5 km

Community Organizing Network for Environmental Health (CONEH) Objectives

- Increase knowledge/awareness of asthma and environmental triggers and of available community resources (e.g., tenants rights organizations, environmental groups)
- Reduce physical environmental hazards in the neighborhoods involved (e.g., illegal dumping, air pollution)

Evaluation Methods

- Qualitative Evaluation
- 20 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted between August and November, 2005.
- Respondents were Steering Committee (SC) members CONEH staff members, and key community, non-SC members who were had familiarity with CONEH.

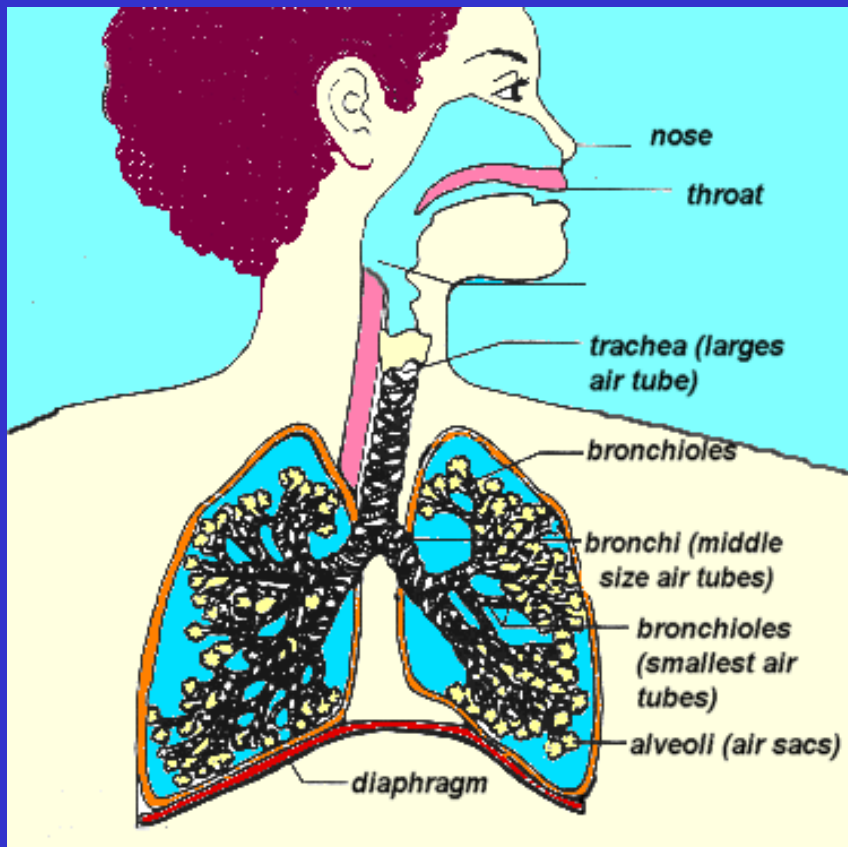
CONEH Intervention Activities

- 3 organizers working with community on environmental concerns.
- Concerns prioritized by Steering Committee based on data already collected and interviews with key groups and organizations.
- Prioritized Concerns:
 - Air Quality Education and Policy Advocacy
 - Housing Awareness and Policy Advocacy
 - Community Education and Awareness

Activities Focusing Upon:

- Education/Awareness for community residents around:
 - Health Effects of PM 2.5 and poor housing
 - Air quality and current air quality related projects
 - neighborhood participation in decisions regarding land use related to PM exposure
- Advocating for inclusion of Health Impact Assessment for projects affecting local land use.
- Disseminating and translating findings of study through fact sheets, community forums, presentations to policymakers.

Why are PM and Ozone Important?



- PM10 particles can be inhaled and get into the nose and larger airways.
- PM2.5 particles can also get breathed in, and reach deep into the lungs.
- Ozone is a gas and can easily be breathed deep into the lungs.

Accomplishments of CONEH

- Increased Awareness of Environmental Health Issues in Detroit
- Had an Impact on Environmental Projects/ Policy in Detroit
- Gave the Community a Stronger Voice to Bring About Change
- Brokered resolution to Parent's Concerns about Contaminants at a Local School

Challenges of CONEH

- Achieving results in 5 year time period
- Affecting Environmental Health Policy in the City of Detroit

Lessons Learned

- To build capacity in environmental health, need to reduce following barriers to participation:
 - Lack of concrete information on health issue
 - Lack of knowledge on how to participate in policy decision-making
 - Lack of knowledge and capacity of decision-making bodies to solicit/encourage grassroots citizen participation.