




## Creating a Virtual Regional Asthma & Allergy School Nurse Expert Network

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## Presenter Disclosures

**Amy Paulson & Lorene Alba**


- › (1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

“No relationships to disclose”




## Learning Objectives


1. Describe the utility of a virtual learning community approach to implement an NHLBI Guideline compatible regional school nurse champion program.
2. Identify key components to preparing school nurses to serve as lead mentors and champions within their school system for best practice asthma management.
3. Demonstrate the program components needed to support school nurses in taking and passing the national asthma educators examination.
4. Assess the approaches to engaging school systems in participating in a virtual learning community for asthma management.
5. Discuss the impact of the Asthma and Allergy (A2) School Nurse Expert Program on asthma management in the southeastern region of Virginia.



## Program History

- › Former Allies Against Asthma Grantee
- › Long standing partnership with American Lung Association 
- › 600+ nurses across 8 school districts
- › 3 years of “taking the show on the road” with limited results
- › Coalition focus on sustainable solutions
- › Estimated 40–60,000 children in region with asthma
- › Over 25,000 documented school age children with asthma
  - Only 7,400 have asthma action plans (30%)



AHA Moment...



## Funding


- › Year 1 – Virginia Department of Health Asthma Control Project/Virginia Asthma Coalition (\$4,700)
- › Year 2 – No Funding – maintained by coalition
- › Year 3 – American Lung Association Asthma Friendly Schools Grant (\$15,000)
- › Year 4 – No Funding – maintained by coalition

› Lots of in-kind staff and logistical support from American Lung Association & Eastern Virginia Medical School

## Asthma & Allergy School Nurse Expert (A2) Program Goals

- › Improve asthma management in schools through increasing the number of school nurses who are certified asthma educators
- › Develop collaborative network to identify & implement solutions improve asthma management to focus on:
  - Increased staff, student and parent education on asthma basics & emergency response
  - Implementation of supportive policies, procedures, & guidelines
  - Increased school-provider communication
  - Increased use of asthma action plans
- › Disseminate 6 key messages for asthma



## Program Basics

- ▶ “Regular” School Nurses (1–3 per district) to serve as asthma champions
  - 9 school districts
  - 11–20 nurses (varied by year)
- ▶ Expert trainers
  - Asthma Specialists
  - American Lung Association
- ▶ Coalition Oversight



## Technology

- ▶ GoToMeeting (92%)
- ▶ USB headsets (92%)
- ▶ Google Groups (85%)
- ▶ Email group network (85%)
- ▶ ALA’s Asthma Incident Report (AIR) database



## Training

- ▶ Monthly training via GoToMeeting
- ▶ Limited in-person training sessions & materials
  - American Lung Association’s **Asthma Educator Institute**
  - Nurse Asthma Care and Education (NACE) program
  - The Asthma Educator’s Handbook
  - DVD AE-C prep course from Association of Asthma Educators
- ▶ **Goal: NAECB Certified Asthma Educator Exam**



## Train the Trainer Model



## Best Practice Materials

- ▶ Utilization of standard best practice materials
  - American Lung Association Asthma-Friendly School Initiative Programs
    - Open Airways For Schools
    - Asthma 101, What You Need to Know™
  - CINCH’s Pinch of Prevention – Asthma Action Module
  - Asthma Control Test
  - EPA’s Tools for Schools Program



## A2 Nurse responsibilities

- ▶ Attend web and in-person training
- ▶ Utilize e-resources & hard copy materials
- ▶ Provide ongoing staff training
  - Nurses, teachers, administrators, coaches, bus drivers, etc
- ▶ Consultation on tough cases
- ▶ Implement educational offerings
- ▶ Champion policies



## American Lung Association Partnership

- ▶ Asthma-Friendly School Initiative. best practice materials & training
  - Open Airways For Schools
  - Asthma 101, What You Need to Know™
  - Asthma Educator Institute
- ▶ Expertise
- ▶ Access to Asthma Friendly Schools Network
- ▶ Real partnership



## Outcomes

### Change in Expertise & Intention

- ▶ Pre-program, 77% did not plan to take AE-C exam
- ▶ Post-program, 8% did not plan to take AE-C exam  
( $p = .02$ )
- ▶ 9 passed AE-C exam, 3 did not pass (75% pass rate)

### Education & Expertise

- ▶ Average of 800 person-hours of education provided each year to program participants
- ▶ 2010-2011 School Year - 9, 746 person hours of participant education
- ▶ Yearly in-services to nursing staff
- ▶ Tracking Asthma Action Plan usage
- ▶ Increased program participation in 2010-11 81% (11 nurses to 20)
- ▶ Maintained participation of 60-70% live web conferences across year



## Program challenges

- ▶ Difficulties with scheduling online & in-person meetings
- ▶ Variable implementation of programs at school sites
- ▶ Difficulty tracking outcomes at the school and child level
- ▶ Lack of provider utilization of asthma action plans
- ▶ Poor parental follow through
- ▶ Hesitancy to implement policies by schools
- ▶ Lack of technology expertise of nurses
- ▶ Firewall issues for web conferencing



## Success Stories

- ▶ Flooring replacement policy
- ▶ Extension of AE-C activities into greater community
- ▶ Schools tracking Asthma Action Plans & asthma-related data
- ▶ Identification of care continuum issue with emergency services
- ▶ Sustainable, cost-effective program for improving asthma management
- ▶ One district-wide Tools for Schools program



## Recommendations

- ▶ Find funding to support continuation, expansion, & formal research evaluation of model program
- ▶ Create cohorts of nurses & mentor nurses
- ▶ Improve system of recording & posting web conferences
- ▶ Written commitment for policy intentions from school districts
- ▶ Recruit in Spring for Fall Cohort
- ▶ Start in October, skip the summer!



## Questions?

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