

## Helping Residents Breathe Easier in Duval County, Florida! As of October 2007

### Healthy People 2010 Objective:

24-6 Increase the proportion of persons with asthma who receive formal patient education, including information about community and self-help resources, as an essential part of the management of their condition.

### Issue:

Hospital emergency room (ER) visits due to asthma are significantly higher for every age group in Duval County than in other Florida regions. The county experiences elevated cost from the increased number of ER visits. Based on a 2005 study, asthma prevalence rates and the associated expenses affecting the citizens of Duval County included:

- 190% higher asthma death rate for people under 35 in Duval County vs. state of Florida
- 30.7% county rate vs. the state's 14.2 % asthma death rate for blacks vs. whites
- 28.1% county rate vs. the state's 10.6% asthma death rate for women vs. men
- 26.5% of all residents seeking care for asthma in the ER were self-pay or under-insured
- 25.9% of white people seen in the ER for asthma were covered under public sources
- 43.7% of black people seen in the ER for asthma were covered under public sources

Not surprisingly, this data adds up to a strenuous physical, emotional, and financial burden for Duval County residents.

### Intervention:

In order to address this enormous burden, the Healthy Jacksonville 2010 Program formed a *Coalition* to address the asthma problem. The *Healthy Jacksonville Asthma Coalition* is a group of individuals from many local organizations including *Wolfson Children's Hospital*, *Baptist Health*, *Shands Hospital*, the Duval County Health Department (DCHD) Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (CDP&HP) Division, and the Duval County Medical Society. Their mission is to reduce the incidence and economic burden of asthma in Duval County through better education and management.

In early 2004, the coalition surveyed both asthma care providers and *asthma* sufferers. Based upon that data, the coalition decided to prioritize the development of a comprehensive list of asthma resources. Both health care organizations and families would benefit from the ability to pinpoint asthma services available in Duval County in one resource booklet. The group received funding from a *Department of Health Community Environmental Health Advisory Board Grant* and the *Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant*. The funding allowed the coalition to develop an asthma resource directory, orchestrate a marketing plan, and train community members about the area's available resources.

The final list included clinical services, educational support, professional training, support groups, community organizations and other state/national resources (like websites and hotlines). Members of the coalition contributed information about their own organizational services and helped research all other available resources in Duval

County. The marketing department of the DCHD compiled the information into a bright, colorful, booklet for mass distribution. The coalition provided the directory to local hospitals, schools, clinics, and after-school programs, free of charge. Local newspapers advertised the community trainings and the resource guide.

**Impact:**

The first printing of the asthma resources directory consisted of 10,000 copies. Since the first printing, the demand for the resource guide has continued to increase and additional copies are made yearly to distribute in the community. Many health department clinics and community education programs have reported an increase in participation thanks to the resource guide. Although it is too early to see changes in available asthma data, the asthma marketing endeavor is a great success.

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