



THE ASTHMA CENTER
At Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Statewide Easy Breathing[®] News

Fall 2018

Creator of Easy Breathing Retires

Dear Colleagues,

After 46 years of working as a physician, I retired on July 1, 2018. For me, retirement is bittersweet as it is for many of us, but like many, I hope to enjoy more time with my family and travel to all the bucket list places while I am still able.

I leave Easy Breathing[®] in good hands. Jessica Hollenbach and Tregony Simoneau have been co-Directors of the Asthma Center and the Easy Breathing program since 2016. They are working hard to find additional funding streams for the program now that State funding has disappeared, and they are being successful. The program continues to thrive in multiple other states and we continue to demonstrate positive outcomes in reducing Emergency Department visits and hospitalizations for asthma in children and adults in addition to cost savings to the medical care system. So, keep up the good work; groups throughout the US are impressed with your results and with your efforts.

While I have retired, I will remain active professionally. I have been asked by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) to lead the next revision of the national asthma guidelines (National Asthma Education and Prevention Program Expert Panel Report-4 (NAEPP EPR-4)). With 18 of my colleagues, we will begin the update by targeting 6 areas that require immediate revision including the use of long acting bronchodilators (LABAs) and long acting muscarinic antagonists (LAMAs) in the management of asthma, immunotherapy for asthma, use of fractional expired NO (FeNO) and bronchial thermoplasty (a new approach in adults with severe asthma) and finally the effectiveness of home environmental allergen reduction strategies in managing asthma. I am greatly honored to have been asked and I am looking forward to leading this effort. One of the new aspects of EPR-4 will be the incorporation of implementation strategies in the new recommendations. All of this effort is based upon our work with you in implementing Easy Breathing here in CT.

Highlights

- Letter from Dr. Cloutier
- Pulmonologist's Corner
- AsthmaNet
- Electronic Easy Breathing
- EPR-4 guidelines

If you have thoughts or ideas about the new guidelines, let me know. When the draft recommendations are released for public comment, I will make sure to engage you in reviewing them especially in the area of implementation.

Finally, I want to thank you for your collegiality, inspiration and support since 1998 when we launched Easy Breathing. While I truly enjoyed patient care, working with the primary care community has been the most satisfying activity of my professional career. I have witnessed your dedication and compassion for your patients and your substantial and sustained efforts to improve the health care of children with asthma. For me, it has been an incredible experience. You have made a big difference in the lives of children and adults with asthma.

Thank you,

Michelle M. Cloutier, MD

Pulmonologist's Corner—Dr. Tregony Simoneau, Asthma Center Co-Director

- ◆ We have been accepted as a satellite recruitment site for a NIH-funded, multi-center asthma-prevention study called PARK: Preventing Asthma in High Risk Kids.
- ◆ We are planning to enroll children 2-4 years of age at high risk of developing asthma who will be randomized to receive omalizumab (Xolair) or placebo, monthly for two years and observed for incidence and severity of asthma for the following two years.
- ◆ This will be a challenging study to recruit for, but the results could have important clinical implications and I felt it was important to offer opportunities like this to our children with asthma in Connecticut.
- ◆ Eligible children are likely being followed in your practice!
- ◆ Please see the attached recruitment flyer and feel free to mention it to your patients and families!



New Research

The AsthmaNet group has provided evidence that quintupling inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) at early signs of loss of asthma control **did not** reduce the rate of severe asthma exacerbations treated with systemic steroids among children age 5-11 years with mild to moderate persistent asthma. In addition, children randomized to the high-dose ICS group experienced a lower growth rate (by 0.23 cm per year).

What does this mean for you? Rather than increase the dose of ICS, these data suggest you can maintain the same ICS dose on the sick plan.

Jackson, DJ, Bacharier, LB., and Mauger, DT. et al. Quintupling Inhaled Glucocorticoids to Prevent Childhood Asthma Exacerbations. N Engl J Med. 2018 Mar 8;378(10):891-901.

Easy Breathing goes Electronic

We are excited to announce a new pilot project in collaboration with Community Health Services, Inc in Hartford. With funding from the Cigna Foundation, we will be piloting the acceptability and feasibility of an electronic version of Easy Breathing. To move from paper to digital, we will be using Tonic™ as the platform. Patients will complete all Easy Breathing forms on a tablet. Providers will create severity-appropriate treatment plans on the tablet that can be shared with the school nurse or pharmacist. All the data entered into Tonic will be integrated into the electronic health record (NextGen).

The project launch date is set for January 2019. Stay tuned as we update you on implementation successes and challenges.

Dr. Cloutier Chairs Revision of National Asthma Guidelines

- ◆ The last update to the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) guidelines came from the Expert Panel Report 3—Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma (EPR-3) in 2007.
- ◆ When the new Guidelines are released, the Easy Breathing program will evaluate them and decide whether changes should be made to the program.
- ◆ Link to Expert Panel Report 4 (EPR-4) Working Group: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/advisory-and-peer-review-committees/national-asthma-education-and-prevention->

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