



Guest Column: Dr. Dave's Corner



 @AllergyKidsDoc

Most of us long for the first hints of spring, with warmer weather, green grass, and the chirping of birds returning from a long winter away. Unfortunately, many people with asthma dread this time of year, as it also signals the onset of tree pollen season.

Tree pollen is typically elevated during the spring months and is highest on warm, dry days. For those who suffer from allergies, this can be a particularly challenging time of year. Not sure if pollen is elevated? Just look for the miserable people with itchy, watery, swollen eyes and stuffy, runny, sneezy noses...they'll be able to tell you!

Roughly 60-80% of people with asthma also have allergies to indoor and/or outdoor allergens. Exposure can lead to not only upper respiratory symptoms, but can trigger bronchospasm and asthma exacerbations as well.

Treatment relies on medications and avoidance. Non-sedating long lasting oral antihistamines are 1st line therapy (such as cetirizine, loratadine, and fexofenadine). Nasal steroid sprays are most helpful for congestion and postnasal drip but must be used daily, ideally starting a few weeks before pollen season starts. Leukotriene modifiers aren't particularly helpful when used as monotherapy for rhinitis, but can help attenuate the asthma response to allergens.

Avoidance tips include keeping windows closed at all times, especially the bedroom! Each night, face/hair should be washed to remove pollen and clothing should be changed before bed.

When the combination of medications and avoidance are no longer effective, desired, or tolerated, then immunotherapy may be indicated and can be very helpful long term therapy for many patients.

Dave Stukus, MD pediatric allergist and Easy Breathing Physician Leader at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus OH. Part of the National Easy Breathing Program.

Highlights

- Spirometry training dates
- In the Spotlight: Melinda Moran, Pioneer Valley Pediatrics
- Updated 2015 Asthma Treatment Selection guide
- Easy Breathing Enrollment Map (pg. 2)
- Recent publications and presentations (pg. 2)

Have you heard?

- We have developed an electronic PDF version of our asthma treatment plan. Treatment selection options are specific to the asthma severity
- The file can be easily imported into an electronic health record.

In the Spotlight

Melinda Moran, Pioneer Valley Pediatrics

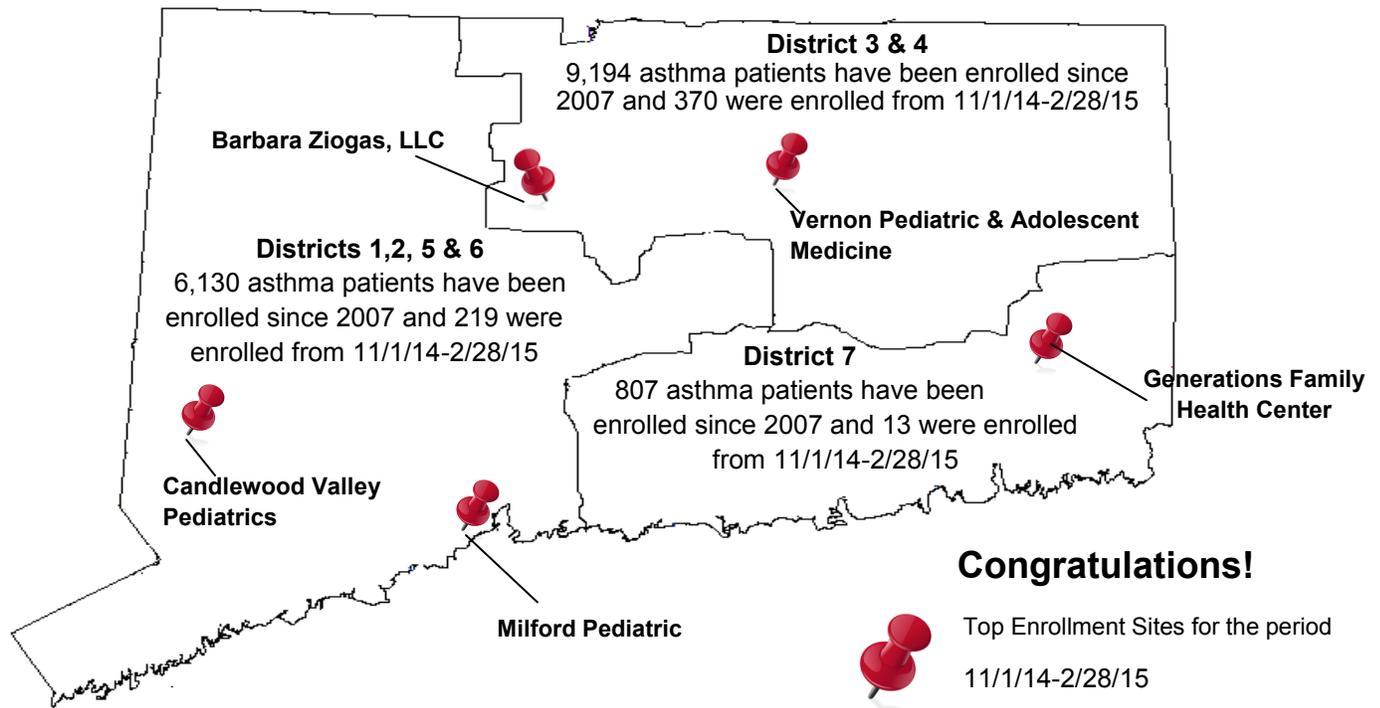
"Thanks to Easy Breathing we recently received our Level 3 NCQA accreditation! We love this program and all it does for our patients with asthma"

Easy Breathing Funding

Recently, funds for the Statewide Easy Breathing program were eliminated from Governor Malloy's proposed biennial budget. Several other human health and social services programs were also cut. Since the budget release, we have been working hard to advocate for the reinstatement of funds to the budget — but we could use *your* help. Please take a minute to contact your practice's local legislator and senator and tell them what continued support for Easy Breathing means to you, your practice and the health of your patients with asthma.

Easy Breathing Enrollment

From July 2007 to February 2015, Easy Breathing[®] Statewide has surveyed 68,117 individuals. Of those surveyed, 26% have a diagnosis of asthma. In total, 139,573 individuals have been surveyed since 1998.



Your data, hard at work

In November, we published a new manuscript in the Journal of Pediatrics on the usefulness of spirometry for managing asthma: *Mismatch between asthma symptoms and spirometry: implications for managing asthma in children*. Schifano ED, Hollenbach JP, Cloutier MM. J Pediatr. 2014 Nov;165(5):997-1002

In May, Dr. Hollenbach will be presenting at the American Thoracic Society's International conference in Denver, CO on: *The Effect of Environmental Tobacco Smoke on Asthma Severity in Children Enrolled in the Easy Breathing[®] Program in Connecticut*.

Spirometry Training

The Easy Breathing program is offering more dates to train clinicians in spirometry. If you are interested please ask your Easy Breathing Coordinator for a spirometry brochure or visit: <http://connecticutchildrensc3r.org/asthma/spirometry-training/>

June 13, 9:00 -11:00 a.m. August 19, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. December 5, 9:00 -11:00 a.m



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