



ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Asthma Alliance

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS LIVING WITH ASTHMA

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This series is dedicated to recognizing the South Carolina coalitions that are leading the way in the improvement of health outcomes for ALL people in South Carolina.

Coalitions highlighted in the "Coalitions' Work Series" are actively working to improve outcomes in the five priority areas of the Alliance: Improve the health of babies, improve the health of children, prevent chronic disease, improve access to high quality primary care, and improve access to behavioral health services.

To share your coalition's work in support of Alliance Goals contact agallego@scha.org

SOUTH CAROLINA ASTHMA ALLIANCE

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS LIVING WITH ASTHMA

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

In South Carolina, asthma is the most prevalent chronic disease and leading cause of acute care and hospitalizations in children. At least one in 10 middle and high school students have asthma in SC. In some areas, even more, 2.5 in 10 middle and high school students have asthma. Asthma is not only a childhood problem, as close to 300,000 SC adults live with asthma, many of whom are undiagnosed. Asthma is a remarkably diverse and all-pervasive disease, with many different disciplines influencing a patient's outcome.

WHAT DOES THE INITIATIVE DO?

South Carolina Asthma Alliance (SCAA) is a partnership of volunteers from local and state government agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, health insurers, and medical professionals working together to address asthma. SCAA works to promote a healthier South Carolina by eliminating the burdens associated with asthma through collaboration, education and leadership.

The Asthma Alliance:

- Strengthens the connection between the many relevant health and environmental programs
- Brings together public and private organizations addressing asthma
- Develops coordinated strategies to address asthma in South Carolina.

The SCAA promotes a plan to increase awareness and education regarding asthma in SC, by providing a resource center (SCasthmaalliance.org). The alliance's efforts are directly in line with the Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina's goal to improve the proportion of children whose asthma is well-controlled. Alliances and coalitions, like SCAA, are working at the grassroots level to accelerate health improvement for all the residents of our state.

The Asthma Alliance's main mechanism of action is an on-going series of regional meetings to educate the many diverse stakeholders interested in improving the management of asthma. These regional programs take asthma educational efforts to the community level, facilitate partnership building, and serve as catalysts for changes in practice. The alliance depends on institutional support from organizations, such as hospitals and school districts, to convene high-impact attendees who can implement change in the local asthma community.

IMPROVING ASTHMA IN SOUTH CAROLINA

SCAA leaders determined the following actions/changes could best accelerate the progress of asthma outcomes improvement across South Carolina:

1. *Ready access to refill histories: accurate and current prescription information must become easily available across all pharmacies*

A successful initiative is the Navi-net Program, provided by SelectHealth of SC, which provides information to providers about all health encounters, including prescription refills. This, in conjunction with self-reported use of controllers and rescue medication, helps providers make decisions to optimize a patient's treatment plan.

2. *Including school nurses in the health paradigm to work collectively with insurance companies, medical homes, patients and their families.*

A patient's asthma care team currently includes the insurance company, the assigned medical home, patient and family. Since children spend most of their day at school, including school nurses in the team could play an important role in the control of asthma during the school week, detection, treatment of asthma, and its crisis triggers.

3. *Integrated communication tools about asthma in children*

With the availability of electronic medical records, we must optimize active and timely communication among all individuals involved in the care plan of people with asthma. For example: physicians/nurse practitioners, respiratory therapists, school nurses, insurance company and case managers, families and patients can give and need to receive timely and accurate information about the patient's asthma flares.

Something as simple as a fax from the emergency room to the patient's provider could allow for a timely adjustment to an asthmatic patient's care plan after a crisis.

4. *In medical practices, especially those with four or more providers (as well as hospitals), training a designated employee to be an asthma educator is likely to lead to major improvements in care and outcomes.*

Asthma education services in many settings (e.g., physician practice, outpatient settings, schools, etc.) are potentially reimbursable. Certified Asthma Educators can provide optimal education to children and adults with asthma and other respiratory problems. Certification as an asthma educator costs \$295 and the certification lasts seven years. Ask SCAA for prep course information.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Three things you can do to accelerate improvement in asthma management:

- Discuss with SCAA leadership how to act on any of the four above-mentioned actions; become actively involved in the SCAA to learn and contribute (and make a difference) in the fight against asthma.
- Offer to link up with others in your area to convene and host a SCAA regional educational meeting.
- Let asthma practitioners and stakeholders in your local area know about SCAA.

CONNECT

The Alliance for a Healthier South Carolina is working to lead the nation in the continuous improvement of health and healthcare for all South Carolina residents. This vision can only be accomplished through the work of alliances like SCAA, which mobilizes stakeholders across the state to continuously improve, collaborate and innovate, so that we, together, will accelerate the pace of improvement in the health of children and adults living with asthma. Defeating asthma takes teamwork. Please help us make it happen!

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