

FOCUS

News from and about the Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

May 30, 2014



Asthma Awareness celebrated in May

Disease affects one out of 10 school-aged children in state

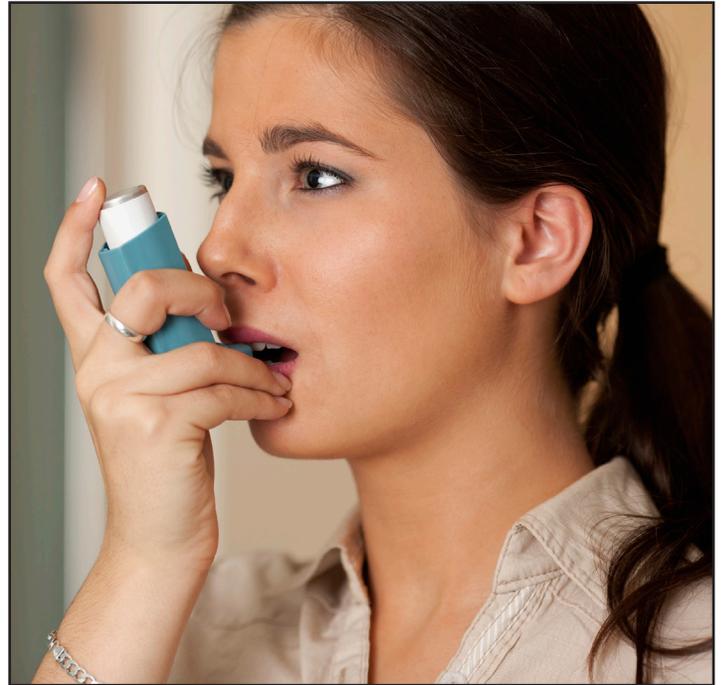
Asthma takes an enormous toll on Kentucky in terms of disability, diminished quality of life, lost work productivity and health care costs. Throughout May, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) will be raising awareness of the impact of the disease on the Commonwealth and conducting outreach through the Kentucky Asthma Partnership to health care providers and schools to help children and adults living with asthma.

“Asthma Awareness Month gives us an opportunity to educate the public about the impact of asthma on Kentucky,” said DPH Commissioner Stephanie Mayfield, M.D. “While there is no cure for asthma, the burden of the disease can be lessened with proper management. With the right tools and resources, the numbers of missed school days and work days, emergency room visits and hospitalizations can be greatly reduced.”

In Kentucky, one out of every 10 school-aged children and one out of every 11 adults has asthma. According to the 2012 Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an estimated 369,700 Kentucky adults and 104,000 children have asthma. Compared to other states, Kentucky has one of the highest rates of asthma in the United States.

Each year nearly 6,000 asthma-related hospitalizations and nearly 20,000 emergency room visits with asthma as a primary diagnosis occur in Kentucky, according to the Kentucky Office of Health Policy. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that asthma costs Kentucky \$399 million each year in direct medical costs and \$46 million in indirect costs due mainly to work absenteeism.

Asthma is also one of the most common childhood chronic diseases and a leading cause of school absenteeism. Children with asthma miss an average of four school days each year. Some children in Kentucky miss many more days, resulting in an estimated annual loss of \$10 million to school districts.



During Asthma Awareness month, DPH will be working with the Kentucky Asthma Partnership to remind health care providers, schools and communities to help adults and children with asthma develop an asthma action plan.

Educational tools will be made available, including Creating Asthma Friendly Schools, the EPR-3 Asthma guidelines and Asthma 1-2-3 Training. In addition, the American Lung Association of the Midland States will be sponsoring the Fight For Air Walk June 7 at Iroquois Park in Louisville, the allergy capital of the United States, according to an annual study by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

DPH will also work throughout the month on asset mapping for Kentucky, which will be an assessment to determine what asthma resources and services are available in Kentucky and where they are located.

One of the most important messages of asthma awareness, according to DPH staff, is knowing what to do when a severe asthma attack occurs.

“An asthma action plan helps patients identify when asthma is out of control and what steps need to be taken

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Tips to make new employees feel welcome

A good welcome to new employees can make a lasting impact. Marcus Erb, a senior consultant with the Great Place to Work Institute, suggests that employers provide staff with more than just basic information in their first weeks. Erb gives these ideas to make new employees feel welcome, shorten the learning curve and enhance employee commitment.

Make a connection. Give the new employee a mentor or a buddy to give a tour of the office, make introductions and maybe take the new staffer to lunch. This is a good chance for staff to get to know the new staffer on a personal level.

Don't rely just on the employee orientation manual. New employees should have done their homework about their new agency, but they'll have a lot of questions. Give them a chance to watch others work and interrupt

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Anya Armes Weber



with questions, if convenient. Share stories about how a project progressed from start to finish and successfully helped customers.

Treat new hires like equals. Invite input from new hires just as you would veterans. A new staffer could even be ready to lead a project.

ASTHMA

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to respond to asthma attacks," said Pam Spradling, manager of the Kentucky Asthma Program.

"Parents and caregivers can help schools identify children with asthma, make sure medications are available to the child and that an asthma action plan is on file," said Spradling. "Schools and workplaces can help reduce the risk of exposure to indoor asthma triggers year round by improving air quality and reducing exposure to second hand smoke."

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear has made improving the health and wellness of Kentucky's children, families and workforce one of his highest priorities. To significantly advance the wellbeing of Kentucky's citizens, Gov. Beshear launched kyhealthnow in February as an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative to reduce incidents and deaths from Kentucky's dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky's successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies over the next sev-

Tips for Living with Asthma

- Avoid Triggers for Asthma
- Consult your doctor to develop a plan to control asthma
- Treat other health conditions that can hinder treatment of asthma

eral years to improve the state's collective health.

Management of asthma – as well as the many other chronic diseases plaguing Kentucky – is vital to the success of kyhealthnow because of the impact on quality of life.

"In Kentucky, improving the way we recognize, treat and manage asthma is so important," said Julia Richerson, M.D., pediatrician and chair of the Kentucky Asthma Partnership. "Asthma impacts the quality of life of so many Kentuckians, limiting their ability to fully live their lives because they cannot breathe well."

For more information about asthma, log on to the Kentucky Department for Public Health, Kentucky Asthma Program's website at <http://chfs.ky.gov/asthma>; or the CDC National Asthma Control Program's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma>.

Earth Day celebration rescheduled for June 12

The 2014 Earth Day Celebration, a collaboration between First Lady Jane Beshear, the Energy and Environmental Cabinet and Kentucky Environmental Education Council, has been rescheduled for Thursday, June 12.

The event will take place between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Old State Capitol. A number of state agencies and other exhibitors will have booths to educate state employees and the public about becoming better protectors of the environment.

State employees, with prior supervisory approval, may request up to two hours to attend.

The celebration, originally scheduled for Earth Day in April, was cancelled due to rain and severe weather. A small recognition ceremony was held at the capitol instead.

DCBS Commissioner Teresa James named to University of Kentucky Social Work Hall of Fame

Midway native also honored with ECU Dean's Award

Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) Commissioner Teresa James was nominated and recently selected for induction into the University of Kentucky College of Social Work's Hall of Fame Award by her peers.

The award is presented annually to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the field of social work. James was recognized and inducted into the Hall of Fame on May 7.

DCBS is the state's primary social services agency and part of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

"This is a much-deserved honor for Teresa from UK's College of Social Work," Governor Steve Beshear said. "Her compassion has been most evident in her advocacy on behalf of children within Kentucky's foster care system. She has cultivated a community approach to building a stronger and more compassionate foster care program while shining a spotlight on the need for permanency."

Gov. Beshear appointed James DCBS commissioner in September 2012. She previously served as acting commissioner and deputy commissioner.

CHFS Secretary Audrey Tayse Haynes praised James' efforts in family preservation.

"Especially given the budget climate, Teresa has been a tremendously effective leader," Secretary



Haynes said. "She is adept at both helping families stay together and at reaching out to partner agencies like the Department of Education and the Kentucky School Boards Association to ensure wider organizational changes are implemented, and that everyone understands each other. Teresa will always listen, to reach a better understanding of a problem. She has the true heart of a social worker."

A native of Midway, James received a bachelor's degree in social work from Eastern Kentucky University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Kentucky. She has been a licensed clinical social worker since.

James has 25 years of clinical social work experience, including more than 17 years working with severely abused and neglected children and their families and four years working with vulnerable adults. She began her career in 1986 as a front-line child protective services worker with the former Kentucky Cabinet for Hu-

man Resources office in Danville.

James said her front-line experience informs all the decisions she makes as commissioner.

"I have seen close up how so many families struggle," she said. "They are dealing with substance abuse, mental health issues and job loss. My goal is to ensure that more children have safe and secure, permanent homes. I am proud to collaborate every day with a wonderful group of individuals who are also working toward this end."

In the late 1980s, James was a part of a group in Florida that began to address the issues of medically complex children in the foster care system. From that group came the development of a Medical Foster Parenting Program in Florida, which became the model for many states around the country.

James has worked in pediatric medical settings with the issues of abuse and neglect and has dealt with issues surrounding children with chronic illness and severe health needs. She has also performed trauma and crisis intervention work and was a domestic violence trainer, educating more than 4,000 medical professionals a year on the issues surrounding violence in families.

James was also recently awarded the Dean's Award from Eastern Kentucky University's College of Safety and Justice at the school's "Night of Distinguished Professionals." The evening was dedicated to recognizing alumni and other individuals who have made significant contributions in the areas of justice and safety at the local, state, regional, national or international level.

National Hepatitis Testing Day brings dangers of deadly disease into focus

Each May, public health officials around the country work to raise awareness about the health impact of viral hepatitis, a significant but often under recognized public health concern. Health providers across the nation observed May 19 as National Hepatitis Testing Day in the United States.

In the U.S., viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation.

“Viral hepatitis is a very serious health concern which often can go undetected because chronically infected persons may not be obviously ill initially,” said Craig Humbaugh, M.D., senior deputy commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH). “We want Kentuckians to be aware of the dangers of the condition and be able to assess their risk of contracting hepatitis. As is the case with many forms of illness, if caught early, hepatitis is more treatable and less likely to lead to complications. So it’s important to determine if you have risk factors and be tested if you fall into a high-risk category.”

Defined as inflammation of the liver, hepatitis is most typically caused by the hepatitis A, hepatitis B or hepatitis C viruses. The condition can also be the result of exposure to toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use and other bacterial or viral infections.

Millions of Americans have chronic viral hepatitis; most of them do not know they are infected. According to DPH, an estimated 1 percent of the population in the United States has chronic hepatitis C.

Age and certain demographics are important to consider in assessing risk for hepatitis C. Baby boomers – individuals born between 1945 and 1965 - comprise an estimated 27 percent of the U.S. population. Yet, they account for approximately three-fourths of all hepatitis C

virus (HCV) infections in the country; they make up 73 percent of HCV-associated mortality; and are at greatest risk for a form of cancer related to HCV and other HCV-related liver disease.

In addition, individuals with risk factors for chronic hepatitis, like injection drug use, can have rates of chronic hepatitis 30 percent or higher, depending upon the duration of drug use.

“It’s important for everyone to be aware of the dangers of hepatitis and assess their risk of contracting the disease,” said Robert Brawley, M.D., Infectious Disease branch manager, DPH. “For follow-up hepatitis testing, we recommend that individuals contact their health care provider to schedule an appointment or get more information.”

Public health officials encourage everyone to learn more about the disease and recommend researching the ABCs of Viral Hepatitis, a one-page fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C virus infections, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/ABC-Viral-Hepatitis.pdf>.

In addition, the public is encouraged to take an anonymous five-minute online hepatitis risk assessment, <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/RiskAssessment/>.

This assessment, also from the CDC, is designed to determine an individual’s risk for viral hepatitis. The assessment asks questions based upon CDC’s guidelines for hepatitis testing and vaccination. A personalized report can be printed and shared with an individual’s medical provider.

DPH also stresses the importance of being immunized. Currently, there are effective vaccines for both hepatitis A and hepatitis B. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C.

Biggest Loser challenge raises \$340 for KECC

The results from the CHFS Biggest Loser Spring Challenge are complete. A total of 800 pounds were lost across all cabinets and \$340 was raised to support the Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign (KECC). The CHFS team of Rebecca Pearl, Pe-

ter Murphy, Kevin Ibershoff, Anya Weber, Leanna Caven, Peace Nakayima lost a total of 245.9 pounds. Pearl was the Biggest Loser female winner while Murphy was the male winner. Each met or exceeded the nine percent weight loss goal.

The summer challenge began on May 13 and will continue through Aug. 5. The male and female participants who lose the highest percentage of body weight will win a cash prize. The remaining money raised will go to KECC.

Save lives by recognizing warning signs for strokes

To help increase the number of stroke patients who receive treatment for stroke, the Kentucky Department for Public Health's (DPH) Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to raise public awareness of stroke signs and symptoms and to help improve health care for stroke patients.

May is national Stroke Awareness Month. During May and throughout the year, public health will work to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of stroke and encourage people to call 911 immediately by observing the FAST method:

Face drooping: If one side of the face droops or becomes numb. If you are not sure ask the person to smile.

Arm weakness: Is one or both arms weak or numb? Be sure to ask the person to raise both arms.

Speech difficulty: Is the person's speech slurred, are they unable to speak or are they hard to understand? Ask them to repeat simple phrases like, 'The sky is blue.'

Time to Call 9-1-1. Get that person to a hospital immediately.

Other signs of stroke include sudden severe headache with no cause; sudden difficulty walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; trouble seeing in one or both eyes, and confusion or trouble understanding.

The American Stroke Association provides a stroke risk assessment as well as a mobile app that displays stroke warning signs and a searchable map with hospitals known for heart and stroke care on its website at StrokeAssociation.org/StrokeMonth.

To learn more, visit the Department for Public Health's Web site <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/cd/cardiovascular.htm>.



Learn latest CHFS news, events through social media

In addition to the traditional methods of receiving news, CHFS employees and the public can now get the latest news from social media.

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services have established Twitter and Facebook accounts. To follow the cabinet's Twitter account please search @CHFSKY. To find the cabinet's Facebook page search 'Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.'



In an effort to streamline information, as well as provide the strongest possible content, CHFS agencies are strongly encouraged to send any newsworthy announcements to Information Officer Elden May at elden.may@ky.gov for approval and dissemination.

Passage of budget bill allows employees to receive annual salary increments beginning July 1, 2014

The 2014-2016 Budget Bill (House Bill 235) provides for state employee annual increments. Beginning July 1, 2014, annual increments will be granted to all state employees on their individual anniversary dates. An employee's "anniversary date" is the annual increment date which is established based on completion of the employee's initial probation period in accordance with 101 KAR 2:034 Section 4 (3).

For fiscal year 2014-2015, an annual increment percentage will be provided on the annual base salary of each state employee, as determined by each employee's annual base salary at the time of his or her annual increment date.

For fiscal year 2015-2016, an annual increment of 1% will be provided on the annual base salary of each state employee, as determined by each employee's annual base salary at the time of his or her annual increment date.

A look at the percentage of the salary adjustment by employee salary range for fiscal year 2014-2015:

\$0 - \$27,000	5%
\$27,000.01 - \$36,000	3%
\$36,000.01 - \$50,000	2%
\$50,000.01 and above	1%

- Kentucky Personnel Cabinet