

Maine Asthma Council  
Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2009  
Medical Care Development

**Members Present:** RuthAnne Spence, Marvin Cling, Amy Olfene, Christy Crocker, Leslie Manning, Desi-Rae Severson, Renee Page, Annabelle Suarez, Veronica Currier-Boucher, Ruth Lawson-Stopps

**Via Phone:** Rhonda Vosmus, Donna Levi

**Guest:** Joseph Smith – Maine CDC Intern

**Introductions**

Ruth Lawson-Stopps welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the room with everyone briefly explaining how their work connects with asthma.

**Announcements**

August 7, 2009 is Tribal Health Day for the Passamaquoddy Tribe. The Whatever Festival Family Day scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup> has been moved from Capital Park (due to bad weather) to The University of Maine at Augusta and the Augusta Civic Center Campus. Dr Matthew Aresery will be doing free asthma screenings as part of the Whatever Festival events. The Maine Indoor Air Quality Council recently held their annual business meeting which was followed by a presentation on interpreting mold test results. The Smoke-Free Housing Coalition recently did a training seminar in Bangor which was well attended.

**Funding Application**

The Maine Asthma Program has submitted their programs narrative, budget, and work plan to the Federal CDC for funding consideration. The application was for \$500,000 along with two sub-component applications to address Disparities in Maine and Asthma Self-Management, each sub-component was for \$150,000. Notice of award is expected to be released towards the end of summer. Ruth Lawson-Stopps was appreciative of the assistance members of the council gave in the preparation and reviewing of the application. She commented that the group rose to the occasion and she noted the turn around time was quick and well orchestrated.

**State Asthma Plan**

The plan was recently sent to the council for review and input. Initial changes have been made with a few more comments to add before the plan will be ready for official publication. Thank you to all members who took the time to provide feedback and comments. Ruth Lawson-Stopps called for volunteers to help finalize the plan. Leslie Manning and Renee Page offered to help in this effort. RuthAnne Spence reminded the council that this is a 5-year plan an as such can

Maine Asthma Council  
Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2009  
Medical Care Development

be a living changing document. The intent of the plan is to meet the long term goals and objectives set forth. Donna Levi noted the plan is ambitious and she appreciates the enthusiasm within the council to address asthma in the state, and she hopes the group will remain committed to “rolling up their sleeves” and “getting the work done”.

**Other**

The school health survey results are in and will be analyzed by Medical Care Development. Preliminary data shows there are approximately 187,000 students enrolled in Maine schools with 16,301 having a diagnosis of asthma. 5,776 of these students use daily medication. There are 157 schools that have indoor air committees of some sort. A complete data analysis and report will be conducted and sent to all council members in the future.

**Work plan**

Ruth Lawson-Stopps handed out copies of the Maine Asthma Programs work plan for the groups own information and perusal.

**Council Meeting Schedule**

The Maine Asthma Program will be sending out a survey monkey link to get a feel for the members schedules and how the council would prefer to meet. The survey will also assess each members level of interest. Some members may prefer to simply remain on an email list to receive meeting notes while others may wish to come to each meeting in person. Leslie Manning offered the Department of Labor’s, Career Centers polycom system (a video-telephone connection system that does not require high speed internet or webcams) to those members who may have to travel a long distance to meet. By using the Polycom at the Career Center locations around the state, travel could be reduced.

**Asthma Awareness Initiative**

Ruth Lawson-Stopps informed the council that the Lung Association has distributed the asthma data document to the legislature. The council feels it is important that in general, everyone in Maine needs to know the data and costs associated with asthma. Annabelle Suarez offered to get the data document out to the people she works with. Leslie Manning thinks that school board members should also see the document as school board members can be a catalyst for change at the community level. Leslie also offered to make the data document available on her information table when she attends conferences, seminars, and presentations. Christy Crocker suggested insurers like MEMIC need to see the document. Ruth Lawson-Stopps called for volunteers to work on creating a plan of dissemination for asthma information. Annabelle Suarez,

Maine Asthma Council  
Meeting Minutes  
June 25, 2009  
Medical Care Development

Judy Gopaul, Donna Levi, Veronica Currier-Boucher, Traci Wall (per Annabelle) and a member from the Lung Association will help on this as time permits.

**Maine Indoor Air Quality Council Presentation**

Christy Crocker gave a presentation on the formation and activities of the MIAQC. The council was formed in 1998 as a result of a business group pulled together by Governor King. The council was initially funded by the Lung Association, but now relies on membership dues, training fees, and sponsorships. More information on the councils activities, as well as best practice information can be found on their website at [www.maineindoorair.org](http://www.maineindoorair.org)

**Smoke-Free Housing Presentation**

Amy Olfene gave a presentation on the formation and accomplishments of the Smoke-Free housing coalition. The initiative began in 2003. At that time, data suggested a high demand for smoke-free housing options while there was a low supply of this type of housing. The coalition has put into place many policies around smoke-free housing, and while there is no “cookie-cutter” policy, the coalition will work with landlords/property owners in creating a smoke-free policy that will work for them. More information on the coalitions activities can be found on their website at [www.smokefreeforme.org](http://www.smokefreeforme.org)

**Home Environmental Check-sheet**

Amy Olfene shared with the council a draft check sheet that was the result of the Homes workgroup efforts to create a self-assessment tool for homeowners and renters. The literacy level was discussed and this issue will be addressed further in the Homes workgroup.

**Asthma Educators Institute**

Rhonda Vosmus gave a brief update on this years annual training that was conducted in May. There were 59 participants of that 23 were respiratory therapy students who are to attend the training as part of their educational curriculum. Initial feedback showed the school nurses who attended the institute felt the program did not meet their specific needs. The program seemed too in depth. Rhonda suggests a 1-day class geared towards school nurses to meet their particular needs, other than that, she was unsure of the best way to reach that audience. The Maine Association of School Nurses would be a good way to reach the school nurse population and should be able to provide contact information for all the nurses in the State.