

Maine Asthma Council  
Schools Workgroup  
December 7, 2009  
Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** Elaine Beaulieu, Bonnie Irwin, Carol Westinghouse, Ruth Lawson-Stopps, Nancy Dube, Shannon King, Renee Page, Lee Gilman, Marla Blake, Angela Mowatt, Sue Bouchard

**Guest:** Carol Westinghouse

**Introductions**

Ruth welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

**Announcements/news/events**

Ruth informed the group that recently Medical Care Development was awarded funding to address asthma in Washington County. That region of the State has some of the highest ED rates for asthma. Ruth also announced that the Maine Asthma Program was refunded for 5 more years at \$450,000 per year. The program has just finished up the reporting for the previous funding cycle.

**Asthma in School-Talking Points**

The *Asthma in Schools*, talking points for training school staff are available through the program, those wanting copies of the talking points can contact Ruth (or can email Desi-Rae Severson in the Asthma Program). Ruth wants the talking points distributed to the HMPs. Ruth is tentatively travelling up to Eagle Lake, as well as meeting with the Tribal Health Liaisons in Washington County, she will bring talking points to distribute. The asthma program recently looked at ED rates for asthma by HMP and HSA. St Croix Medical Center had the highest number of ED visits for every age group. Lee Gilman asked if the program has looked at other factors such as availability of other resources. Elaine Beaulieu announced that she conducted a state-wide survey of asthma educators but only got 5 responses, which was no surprise and yielded no additional information.

**Asthma Action Plan Revision**

The plan will be tested before the final revision will be printed. This action plan is for school-aged children. Ruth has advised to use just one until the form is finalized. Ruth also brought the asthma Homes Quiz and asthma Data Sheet – anyone wanting copies can contact Ruth or Desi-Rae Severson. The Asthma Program conducted a school health survey and Ruth has been asked to present data from that survey to the Superintendents Association in the fall.

**Carol Westinghouse- Green Cleaning**

Carol is in the process of developing a “Cleaning and Health” program with a group called INFORM. She now has her own non-profit organization. Carol has worked with the State of Connecticut in their Community School Indoor Environment and Resource Team. The EPA runs a program called “Tools for Schools” which has been around since the early 90’s. They do trainings for schools looking to improve the overall quality of the school, Carol has done a Train-the-Trainer program in Connecticut and they now have mandated “Green Cleaning” in schools in that State. In Vermont Carol has worked with voluntary

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Tools for Schools sites she has worked with some schools every year. Carol has helped New Hampshire use the Tools for Schools program. She has done 15-20 school systems and was wondering how Maine was doing with that program. Carol has also worked on the National School Disinfectant Workgroup, that group has developed policies and procedures on the use of disinfectants. Nancy Dube announced that it can be challenging to get the Department of Agriculture involved. Ruth was looking for some suggestions for 'quick' information for the toolkit. One idea was the *Cleaning for Health and Infection* one-pager as something to be able to give to parents. Mt. Ararat school has a couple of staff that address these concerns in their school which is a good model. One of the measures could be the number of visits to nurses office for inhaler use before and after green cleaning. Another trigger to eliminate is scented hand sanitizers, Carol suggests using non-scented as fragrances can be an asthma trigger.

**Workplan**

Ruth would like the group to review the work plan periodically. The time frame is September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2009. Another work plan will be developed next year. Ruth explained that she will be presenting the ED report at the next meeting after the data has been made into maps showing the geographic regions of the State. The school tool-kit is on schedule and there will be a retreat in the future to focus on the specific content of the kit. Marla Blake suggested once complete the tool-kit be disseminated regionally. Marla also wanted the asthma talking points document, it will be sent electronically to the group and will be sent to school health coordinators, asthma educators, and anyone else who would like it. The draft asthma action plan went to family practice residents to be piloted and also to get feed back. Sue Bouchard will show the plan to her providers at their quarterly meeting and seek feedback which she will send along to Ruth. Ruth would like to see the plan 'tested' in a few sites before being widely distributed.

**Next Meeting**

The next schools meeting will be January 26, 2010 2:30 – 4:30 at DOE