**Press Release for May 3, 2022**

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**It’s About Awareness: World Asthma Day 2022**

Indianapolis, IN- The Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC), promotes asthma resources and information available in Indiana for clinicians, health care workers, schools, community health workers of all kinds and people with asthma in observance of World Asthma Day on May 3, 2022.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, asthma is the leading chronic condition in the United States. Approximately 25 million Americans have asthma, or about 1 in 13 people. There is currently no cure for asthma, but there are several treatment options available for those living with the condition.

Currently in Indiana, about 6.7% of children and 9.8% of adults have asthma. Minority groups are disproportionately affected by asthma with 12.7% of black adults and 12.7% of multiracial adults having asthma while 9.8% of white adults have asthma.

Asthma is a costly health problem in Indiana. Uncontrolled asthma causes economic strain on individuals with asthma and their families, the health system, and employers. On average, the estimated per-person economic burden is $2,698 and will continue to increase with time.

This information comes from the Indiana Asthma Plan 2021, a strategic plan to address asthma in the state that was developed through the efforts of the Indiana Department of Health and the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC) and is available at <https://bit.ly/3vf0h82>.

**What is Asthma?**

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute defines asthma as a chronic (long-term) condition that affects the airways of the lungs. The airways are tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs and if you have asthma, the airways can become inflamed and narrowed at times.

Asthma affects people of all age groups but often starts in childhood. Symptoms of asthma can include tightness in the chest, wheezing and coughing and can range from mild to severe happening daily or intermittently depending on the individual.

Asthma symptoms can be triggered by cold air and allergens among many others. If asthma symptoms worsen, it’s referred to as an asthma attack. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute is a great resource for learning more about asthma, visit their website at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/asthma>

**The Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA)-**a World Health Organization collaborative has been hosting and celebrating World Asthma Day since 1998. Each year GINA picks a theme for World Asthma Day. The 2022 theme is“Closing Gaps in Asthma Care”.

**Some of the identified gaps in asthma care include:**

* Equal access to medicines.
* Differences in care for socioeconomic, ethnic and age groups.
* Communication and education that is provided for people with asthma.
* Health care providers asthma knowledge and awareness.
* The general public’s (non-asthmatics) and health care professional’s awareness and understanding that asthma is a chronic (long term) disease.

**Awareness is empowerment**

Asthma affects millions of people worldwide yet there is still no cure. There are excellent treatments and medications available. More people need to know what asthma is, how it affects sufferers and the costs related to families, individuals and workplaces. There is an emotional and financial toll on people who live with asthma due to the cost of medications and unpredictable triggers such as weather, temperature and emotions that can cause or exacerbate asthma symptoms.

The more that people know about how to prevent, treat and control asthma symptoms the better their health outcomes will be.

**Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC)**

**The Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC)** was first established in 2003 as individuals and organizations interested in reducing the burden of asthma, improving the quality of patient care, reducing environmental triggers and strengthening asthma programming in Indiana. **The following InJAC resources are available at** <https://indianactsi.org/community/initiatives/indiana-joint-asthma-coalition/>

* Resource articles
* Free digital booklets about asthma
* Regular coalition meetings- get involved and become a member of InJAC

**The Marion County Public Health Department Resources:**

* **Website:** <https://breatheeasier.hhcorp.org/> - provides resources to help patients and their caregivers navigate their condition and control their asthma using self-management education.
* **Online referral for the Breathe Easy Asthma Program**-providing in-home assessments and clinical, environmental and behavioral interventions is available at <https://mcphdredcap.hhcorp.org/surveys/?s=YFXLN494FE>

**Get Involved-2022 Indiana Asthma Summit**

**Register Now—for a free virtual Asthma Summit on Thursday August 25th from 10am-2pm**. This free virtual 4-hour event will provide participants with strategies for asthma, prevention and treatment from both clinical and lay person standpoints. The summit will provide information and resources on health literacy in addition to how to control asthma from the social perspectives of environment, financial status and mental health. Support for asthma sufferers in a variety of settings will be provided as well.

**Free registration at:** [**https://bit.ly/IndianaAsthma**](https://bit.ly/IndianaAsthma)

**Contact Coalition Lead- Courtney Stewart at** **cestewar@iu.edu**

***InJAC is part of the Connections IN Health project, which is made up of a team of experts focused on some of Indiana’s most chronic conditions, including obesity, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Please reach out to Courtney Stewart, Lead of the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition at cestewar@iu.edu for more information about InJAC.***

**For more information on InJAC and other chronic disease coalitions in Indiana, contact Connections IN Health at** **cinh@iu.edu** **or visit** [**https://indianactsi.org/community/initiatives/**](https://indianactsi.org/community/initiatives/)

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