

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Breathe easy at home program

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New Assistant Commissioner in ISD Housing!

Breathe Easy at Home would like to congratulate and welcome Indira Alvarez, who has been promoted to the position of Assistant Commissioner for Housing in Inspectional Services! Indira has worked for the city of Boston for 15 years, 11 of which have been in the Housing Division as the Assistant Director for the Housing Division.

Indira's first priority with the Division will be overseeing the implementation of the new rental ordinance for the city. Her involvement revolves around making sure the rental property registration goes smoothly as well as hiring new staff to account for the new properties to be inspected.

When she's not working, Indira likes to watch the History Channel, to read and to dance. She is a wife, a mother of three, and a cat-lover. Welcome, Indira!



The Status of Smoke-free Housing in Boston

by Margaret Reid, Director of the Division of Healthy Homes & Community Supports

The 2006 Surgeon General's report noted that 60% of American children between the ages of 3 and 11 years—nearly 22 million kids—are exposed to secondhand smoke. Increasingly, the primary source of this exposure is the home. Secondhand smoke in multi-family dwellings causes or makes worse a number of health issues including asthma, ear infections and respiratory infections. Because tobacco smoke is a Class A carcinogen, there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. Ventilation systems do not work to prevent smoke from moving between units.

Eliminating smoking in enclosed

spaces is the only way to completely protect people, particularly children, from exposure. Boston Housing Authority, which houses 11,000 Boston residents, was the first large housing authority in the United States to implement a 100% smoke free policy, implemented on September 30, 2012. They did this after two years of surveying and meeting with residents and training staff on the policy.

Every occupied unit in BHA received a survey to solicit their opinion on transitioning to smoke-free. With a response rate of 26%, 90% of respondents supported

a smoke-free policy.

In Boston, many operators of multi-family housing and Section 8 property owners have transitioned to smoke free, but not all landlords know that it is completely legal. A resource for tenants and landlords on going smoke-free can be found at www.bostonsmokefreehomes.org. If your patients are exposed to tobacco in their housing, encourage them to download the Smoke Free Housing Guide and share it with their landlords.

Video from Boston Asthma Home Visiting Collaborative **coming soon!**

Learn about Boston's free asthma home visiting resource for your Boston patients with asthma. Multi-lingual asthma home visitors reinforce individualized asthma management including how and when to take medications and ways to keep their homes smoke-free and pest-free. Low-cost cleaning and allergen reduction supplies are provided.



Sickle Cell Disease & Breathe Easy at Home

Providers,

Sickle Cell Disease refers to a group of genetic blood disorders, the most common of which is sickle cell anemia (HbSS). Individuals with SCD experience a number of symptoms, including unpredictable episodes of debilitating pain. These pain episodes can lead to hospitalizations and have life-threatening consequences.

SCD causes inflammation throughout the body, including the lungs. Many common airway irritants that trigger asthma attacks can also trigger SCD pain episodes and lead to Acute Chest Syndrome. About one third of people with SCD also have asthma, which further increases their susceptibility to environmental triggers and the potential life-threatening respiratory conditions that may result. Even those with SCD who do not have a diagnosis of asthma have some degree of airway inflammatory disease, and so they too are at risk of severe consequences when exposed to environmental triggers.

Because of these facts, Breathe Easy at Home has opened the program to include your patients with SCD. Most of our referrals are for children with asthma but throughout the years, we expanded to include adults with asthma as well as infants and older adults who have respiratory conditions that are not asthma. With that said, feel free to screen your patients with SCD for housing conditions that may affect their lung health.

Best,

Amanda A. Ali, Breathe Easy at Home

Rajan Sonik, Equal Justice Works Fellow, Medical-Legal Partnership

Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month Activities



Learn and Teach About Asthma

Saturday, May 11, 2013

8:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center

Roxbury, MA

Advanced registration: \$30/Special student rate: \$20/On-site: \$35

For more information or to pre-register: call Jackie at 617-732-7464



FREE YMCA ASTHMA SWIM PROGRAM

For kids with asthma 8-12 years old

Saturdays 10:45am-12:15pm

Starting Saturday, April 27th at the Roxbury YMCA

To register, please contact Jerri at 617-291-5700 or jpratt@ymcaboston.org

285 Martin Luther King Blvd. Roxbury, MA 02119



FREE CURTIS HALL ASTHMA SWIM PROGRAM

For kids with Asthma ages 8-12 years old

asthma swimmers of all levels

Saturdays, 12pm-3pm

Starting May 4th and running for 8 consecutive Saturdays, at the Curtis Hall Community Center

20 South St., Jamaica Plain, MA

To register or for more information please contact Jeannette Ayala after 1pm at 617-635-5193



Dorchester House Multi-Service Center

FREE DORCHESTER HOUSE MULTI-SERVICE CENTER ASTHMA SWIM

For kids with asthma ages 8-13

Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Starting Thursday April 25, 2013 and finishing June 26, 2013.

Dorchester House Multi-Service Center Pool, 1353 Dorchester Ave., Dorch., MA

02122 ***Space is limited to 15 kids! ***

For info or to register call Dirk at 617-740-2234 or email Dirk.Bovell@dorchesterhouse.org

BREATHE EASY AT HOME <http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing/bmc>