

## A Year in Review of the

# *Breathe easy* at home program

Volume 6, Issue 1

### Breathe Easy at Home 2012 Accomplishments & Highlights

Happy New Year, providers!

This year, we have a lot to be proud of! Breathe Easy received 233 referrals in 2012! Of the cases closed in 2012, 47% resulted in corrected violations without prosecution and an additional 9% are being recommended for prosecution. During the January 2012 meeting of the Breathe Easy at Home Steering Committee, case reviews showed a significant pest problem in several units in the Bromley development in Jamaica Plain. In response, the Boston Housing Authority, Inspectional Services and the Breathe Easy at Home Coordinator collaborated to assess the severity of infestation in the remaining units and to streamline the integrated pest management process in the developments. Since the start of the project in February 2012, the IPM follow-up process has been well-organized by Bromley management, who now meets with ISD inspectors regularly; there has been a decrease in the number of cases that go to court and management reports fewer pest-related complaints overall!

One thing that we noticed while collecting 2012 data is that inspectors have trouble getting into a fair amount of Breathe Easy referrals for both inspections and re-inspections. This fact will be one of Breathe Easy's foci in 2013.

Sincerely,

*Amanda Ali*, Breathe Easy at Home Coordinator

### Rental Registration Ordinance

Beginning this year, Boston landlords will be required to register with the Inspectional Services Department no later than July 1 of each year, resulting in a city of Boston rental database. Smaller (less than six units), owner-occupied units are exempted. Landlords will be required to have proactive inspections of their units every five years. With the new database comes the overhaul of the Breathe Easy at Home website, as well!

### Breathe Easy at Home Announcements!

The Breathe Easy at Home Steering Committee would like to announce the addition of two partner agencies this year:

The **Fair Housing Commission** works to eliminate discrimination and increase access to housing in Boston through investigation and enforcement, affirmative marketing, housing counseling, and interagency coordination. The BFHC also manages a computerized listing service of regional housing opportunities in an effort to provide low-income households increased access to housing in 126 cities and towns of metropolitan Boston.

**Health Resources in Action (HRiA)**, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help people live healthier lives and create healthy communities through prevention, health promotion, policy and research. Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative (BHHSC) is a program in HRiA's Environmental Health Department. BHHSC's mission is to promote engagement and participatory processes in all of their programs.

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## Breathe Easy at Home Announcements!

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BHHSC develops community leadership in the form of **Parent Asthma Leaders (PALs)** through the Strengthening Voices Parent Asthma Leadership Program (SVP). SVP PALs come from Boston neighborhoods severely impacted by asthma and are trained to conduct outreach and education in child care settings, schools, and other community venues to advocate for improved asthma management and the elimination of environmental asthma triggers. The PALs are vital to the success of BHHSC's initiatives.

Breathe Easy would also like to announce the formal appointment of Bryan Glascock to Commissioner of Inspectional Service! In November 2011, Mayor Thomas M. Menino appointed Bryan Glascock to Acting Commissioner of Inspectional Services Department. One year later, he became the Commissioner of Inspectional Services. Prior to his appointment, Bryan served as Executive Director of the Boston Air Pollution Control Commission until 2003 when he was appointed Director of the Environmental Department. Bryan's current position as the Commissioner will afford him the opportunity to enhance customer service and provide a more user-friendly computer system. During his tenure at the ISD, Commissioner Glascock hasn't been afraid to get his hands dirty. He has accompanied inspectors on bed-bug, rodent and trash inspections and is committed to collaborative efforts between the ISD and city agencies to ensure safe and healthy housing in Boston.

## Carbon Monoxide: Hazards, Warning Signs & Tips

Sadly, with the recent snow storm, Boston experienced CO-related fatalities. A reminder to your patients:

### Common early symptoms of CO poisoning:

- Fatigue
- Confusion
- Headaches
- Fainting
- Dizziness

### Common Sources of CO:

Space heaters, blocked flue pipes, fireplaces, cars & trucks, gas ranges & ovens, clothing dryers, gas & oil heating systems, BBQ grills

### How to Protect yourself & your patients:

- Install a CO detector. It is required by law that every home and apartment with a potential source of CO must have a carking CO alarm in each apartment and on each occupied floor.
- Never operate any combustion engine indoors.
- Be careful not to have windows open near cars or trucks.
- Do not warm your car up in a garage with the door closed and make sure your tailpipe isn't blocked by snow.
- Have all your heating systems and appliances inspected and cleaned yearly. Keep exhaust vents clear of snow and debris.
- Keep all oil and gas-fired heating systems well maintained.

For more information, call the Office of Environmental Hazards at (617) 534-5966.