



NEWSLETTER

Program Highlight: AH! Asthma Health Program

Maine has the second highest asthma prevalence in the U.S. among adults – only Massachusetts is higher.

The AH! (Asthma Health) Program at Southern Maine Medical Center in Biddeford, Maine, has been in existence since 1997. This program is a multidisciplinary approach designed to improve asthma care.

Initially, Southern Maine Medical Center was one of three pilot sites to implement AH! due to the high asthma rates. The program was developed by MaineHealth and Maine Medical Center. After the grant money ended, the hospital decided to continue the program. In the first 3 years, the asthma program demonstrated reductions in emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations and

missed school days.

With the support of MaineHealth and Maine Medical Center, AH! has accomplished the following since 1997:

- Formed partnerships with patients, primary care providers, asthma educators and community agencies.
 - Standardized patient and provider asthma education materials.
 - Monitored outcomes through interviews with patients and families at baseline, 6 months and 12 months, as well as collected utilization data on emergency department visits and hospitalizations.
 - Developed and implemented statewide school management plans.
 - Adopted the Chronic Care Model for asthma care in 15 clinical sites, including 3 hospitals.
- In July 2004, Maine passed LD 1768 allowing all children to carry their inhalers in school.
 - Annual Asthma Educator Institute provided by the American Lung Association. (All RT students are mandated to take the course.)
 - The AE-C® makes home visits.
 - On May 31, 2007, the AH! (Asthma Health Program) was among two programs selected to receive the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2007 National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management, for our exemplary efforts to provide high-quality asthma care which included environmental controls.

*Christine Rossi
CRT, BA, AEC*

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Current Numbers

- ◆ National pass rate for AE-C® Examination: 68.3%
- ◆ Number of AE-C® certificants nationally: 2,470
- ◆ Over 30 million Americans are living with asthma.
- ◆ Nine million U.S. children under 18 have been diagnosed with asthma.

2009-2011 Board of Directors Elected

The National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB) is pleased to announce the results of the election of four new board members for the 2009-2011 Board of Directors term.

The following individuals were elected by ballot sent to over 2,400 Certified Asthma Educators (AE-C®) in August and September 2008.

The Board acknowledges and appreciates the participation of many of these certificants in the voting process. We are excited to welcome these new board members and look forward to their enthusiasm and new ideas for promoting excellence in asthma education.

The new board members are:

- **Heather R. Steffens, RRT-NPS, AEC**

Heather is Manager of Professional Education for the American Lung Association of Minnesota in St. Paul, MN.

- **Karen Meyerson, MSN, RN, FNP-C, AEC**

Karen is Manager of the Asthma Network of West Michigan in Grand Rapids, MI.

- **Dennis Wissing, PhD, RRT, RPFT, AEC**

Dennis is Assistant Dean at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – School of Allied Health Professions in Shreveport, LA.

- **Mary Cataletto, MD, AEC**
Dr. Cataletto is Associate Director in Pediatric Pulmonology and Director of the Children's Sleep Services at Winthrop University in Long Island, New York.

Linda B. Ford Scholarships Awarded

Clifton Dennis, RRT of Martinez, Georgia, and Joan Upperman, RN, from St. Louis, Missouri, are the recipients of the 2008 Dr. Linda B Ford Scholarships for asthma educators.

The winner of the Health Educator scholarship is Rosa Rodriguez from Chicago, Illinois. This scholarship category is sponsored by Lynda O'Hanlon, a former founding board member of the NAECB.

The annual scholarships are awarded to individuals who have experience working with individuals with asthma, work in underserved areas or

populations, and meet all examination eligibility requirements.

This scholarship was created to provide assistance for individuals pursuing their national asthma educator certification. The award is named after Linda B. Ford, MD, the first chair and a founding member of the National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB).

The NAECB is the first and only U.S. organization to provide a national certification examination for asthma educators. Our mission is to promote optimal asthma management and quality of life among individuals with asthma, their families and

What is Asthma Educator Certification?

AE-C® Certification is the official designation of a certified asthma educator who has the necessary knowledge and skills to counsel patients in asthma management. An asthma educator is an expert in counseling individuals with asthma and their families how to manage their asthma and minimize its impact on their quality of life.

The AE-C® examination is comprised of 175 questions designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to help patients manage asthma. The examination is offered at over 100 computerized locations throughout the U.S. To find the location in your area, please visit our website at www.naecb.org.

Candidates must fulfill at least ONE of the following requirements:

- Currently licensed or credentialed health professional.
- Individuals providing asthma counseling or coordinating services with a minimum of 1000 hours of experience in these activities.

communities, by advancing excellence in asthma education through the certified asthma educator process.

For additional information about the Dr. Linda B. Ford Scholarship or the National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB), please visit www.naecb.org.

Take the Self-Assessment Exam (SAE)

The NAECB Self Assessment Exam (SAE) is a 75-item multiple-choice online assessment tool developed to be parallel in content and difficulty to the actual asthma educator certification examination. Items are based on the four major content areas and detailed content outline that details the knowledge, skills, and ability consistently used to provide asthma education.

Each item includes rationale statements for both correct and incorrect answers. References are provided for each correct answer. The SAE should be regarded as an

assessment tool used to evaluate a candidate's strengths and weaknesses, rather than a study guide for the examination. A passing score on the SAE does not, in any way, guarantee a passing score on the NAECB examination.

Utilization of this SAE tool is not a requirement for eligibility or for success in passing the certification examination.

Both certified practitioners and others involved in asthma education can use the SAE to see if they are remaining current with the profession. It may also be used to

improve knowledge and understanding of strategies used in asthma education. The SAE provides experience in computer-based testing, as well as the NAECB-type items.

The cost is \$65.00 and will be available online to you for a period of 90 days from the date the order is placed.

For more information and to order the SAE, please go to:
http://www.naecb.org/exam_information.htm

Under "How to register", click on "register online" and at the new webpage click on "Order Practice Tests."

AE-C® Exam Based on EPR-2 Until Next Summer

The AE-C® exam questions are currently based on the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) Expert Panel Report-2 (EPR-2) *Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma*. Exam questions related to the newly released EPR-3 guidelines are being "tested" on the current exam version released during the second half of 2008. However, these questions will be pretest items only and will not contribute to a passing or failing score on the examination. The exam content based on the EPR-3 guidelines is expected to be released in the 2009 summer exam version.

The development, assessment, and validation of examination items involve a lengthy and extensive process. New question items appropriate for the examination must be written. The items then undergo a formal review by the entire Examination Committee. Once approved by the Exam Committee, the item is then added as a pretest

item on an exam version. For every exam version, there are 25 pre-test items. Performance on these items is critically evaluated by the professional testing company that administers the exam and the NAECB Exam Committee. If the item is found valid, reliable, and appropriate, it is added to the item bank for future examinations.

With all of this said, please note the very nature of the examination is based on the role of the asthma

educator and, although the Guidelines may reflect a shifting emphasis, the basic concepts are consistent among different versions. We hope this description clarifies why the exam is still based on the EPR-2 guidelines as well as the complexity and the time it takes to change the exam.

If you have additional questions regarding this matter, please contact our office toll free at 800-317-5206 or via email at info@naecb.org.



NEW AE-C® Lapel Pin is Now Available!

Show off your certification with this attractive NAECB Certified Asthma Educator Lapel Pin for the low price of \$10 per pin.

Order yours today at
www.naecb.org!

NEWSLETTER

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Next Issue's

Information Deadline:

February 6, 2009

Promoting Excellence in Asthma Education

We're on the web!

www.naecb.org

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the National Asthma Educator Certification Board is to promote optimal asthma management and quality of life among individuals with asthma, their families and communities, by advancing excellence in asthma education through the certified asthma educator (AE-C®) process.



**NATIONAL
ASTHMA EDUCATOR
CERTIFICATION BOARD**

Get Re-Certified!

AE-C® certification began in 2002. With a 7-year certification period, those who were certified in 2002 will need to **re-take the examination prior to their expiration date in 2009** to maintain their AE-C® certification. The cost for re-certification (\$245) reflects a **\$50 discount** from the initial certification cost of \$295. **TEN (10) free CRCE credits are NOW AVAILABLE—through the AARC—for respiratory therapists passing the re-certification exam!**

The True Value of AE-C®

I am a nurse as well as a patient with asthma. I have worked with children and adults with asthma in many capacities. As soon as this exam became available, I jumped at the chance to take it. I did not question why. I knew why – all too well! I have been through hell and back with asthma since I was born and didn't want others to battle the same thing, if I could help it.

My primary reason for wanting to become an AE-C® was to provide a professional stamp of approval on what I am teaching to asthma patients. My knowledge is validated. It is known that education, in anything, helps! Knowing about your medications, as well as HOW to take them correctly, could add miles to one's quality of life. Just by knowing that asthma doesn't have to place limits on you is worth something to those with severe persistent asthma. Being educated

correctly about asthma certainly helps one to live above and beyond expectations!

If you are learning about your disease and its management and it is the WRONG information, that is definitely NOT helpful, and it could be HARMFUL! The following is a true story: I cared an 8-year old boy with asthma who frequently utilized the emergency room (ER), and was taking Pulmicort Flexhaler™ dry-powder inhaler (DPI). Now, the *responsible* medical resident taught the child to use the dry powder inhaler with a spacer! This young boy was having so much trouble breathing and the primary reason for his poorly controlled asthma: he was not getting his medication! He was taking his medication routinely, but he was taught incorrect technique, so he was not really getting the medicine into his airways! We showed him how to correctly take his medication and his

asthma control dramatically improved.

As medical professionals, we are looked upon as "experts," but clearly we are all not experts at everything. We all have our strengths. I want to be viewed as an expert in asthma education so that my patients have confidence in the education I provide. Being a Certified Asthma Educator helps with that.

If you want to safely take care of your patients, which includes staying up to date with the literature and guidelines, become an AE-C®! You are doing it everyday anyway, so get certified and pass the confidence on to your patients! It all comes down to the bottom line—standardizing asthma education is the best thing for our patients. According to the American Lung Association, "When You Can't Breathe, Nothing Else Matters." How true.

Kristin Homze, RN, MSN, AEC