

May 2013

## **NAECB Scholarship Update**

John Manning, PNP, AE-C.

The National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB) announces the availability of 12 scholarships annually for asthma educators. These scholarships are named after Dr. Linda B. Ford, the first chair and a founding member of the NAECB, the first and only U.S. organization to provide a national certification examination for asthma educators.

The Linda B. Ford scholarship was created to provide assistance for individuals pursuing their national asthma educator certification and who might not be able to afford the entire examination fee. Previous recipients have included respiratory therapists, health educators, nurses, and pharmacists.

Every quarter 3 scholarship winners will be chosen and given a voucher for \$200 towards the \$295 examination fee. Applicants will be considered for two consecutive quarters but will then need to be resubmitted. Winners are selected by the NAECB scholarship committee.

Requirements for the scholarship include taking the exam for the first time, currently working with individuals with asthma, and several years of experience working with individuals with asthma. Please spread the word about this outstanding opportunity and encourage eligible asthma educators to apply. Applications can be downloaded on the homepage at [www.NAECB.org](http://www.NAECB.org).

## **Welcome to Our Board of Directors**

NAECB is delighted to welcome four new members to our Board of Directors. Each brings unique talents and expertise NAECB can leverage to solidify the critical role of asthma educators and promote continued certification. Also returning to our dynamic board for an additional term are Carol Jones, RN, AE-C, Capt. John Manning, CPNP, AE-C, and Gina Spinuzzi, RRT, AE-C. We are delighted to have these dedicated asthma educators support our mission and advance our certification. WELCOME!

### **Jack Barnette, AE-C**

Jack Barnette is an Environmental Scientist with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Chicago. He has worked on environmental issues since 1977. He has worked on a wide variety of topics including emergency response, hazardous materials cleanups, and preparedness issues including

monitoring for radiation and pathogens. Currently he focuses on indoor and outdoor air quality, respiratory health concerns associated with air pollutants, and exposures to environmental asthma triggers.

Jack has lectured and presented numerous training courses on environmental and energy related topics. Barnette works in support of state-wide asthma coalitions in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Jack said, "My mother suffered from asthma her whole life. I'm sure she would be proud of the work we are doing." He has also been involved in community based environmental health initiatives in Cleveland, Northeast Indiana, Northwest Indiana, Western Michigan, the Chicago area, and with tribal communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Much of this work has been with underserved, low income communities.

Mr. Barnette has a bachelor's degree from Northeastern Illinois University and is a registered Healthy Homes Specialist, a certified Radiation Protection Technologist, and a Certified Asthma Educator. Jack's wife Diane is a former teacher who worked for the Chicago Public Schools for 38 years. Jack and his wife have three children and three grandchildren. A fourth will be joining the family in May. In February, 2012 Jack participated in a half-marathon in Death Valley, California. He finished second in his age group.

**Randall Brown, MD, MPH, AE-CDr.** Randall Brown is director of asthma programs at the Center for Managing Chronic Disease at the University of Michigan, and for 10 years has maintained a professorship in Health Behavior and Health Education at the University's School of Public Health.

Dr. Brown received both his B.A. and M.D. from the University of Michigan, and received his Master of Public Health degree from Harvard. He conducted his Pediatrics internship and residency training at Boston University, and completed his clinical postgraduate fellowship in Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine at The Children's Hospital of Boston and Harvard Medical School. He also completed a Respiratory Epidemiology research fellowship at Harvard's Channing Laboratory. Dr. Brown is board certified in both Pediatrics and Pediatric Pulmonology.

Recently, the asthma education program for medical professionals, PACE, for which Dr. Brown is co-author and medical director, has been accepted by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute as the model for physician asthma

education efforts and is now highlighted on the NIH asthma website. Dr. Brown is the only pulmonologist in Michigan who is a certified asthma educator (AE-C) and he shall serve from 2013 to 2015 on the board of directors for the National Asthma Educator Certification Board.

### **Tim Op't Holt EdD, RRT, AE-C, FAARC**

Dr. Tim Op't Holt is a professor in the Department of Cardiorespiratory Care at the University of South Alabama, in Mobile. He attended the advanced respiratory therapy program at the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics, then became a registered respiratory therapist. In Chicago, he held a position teaching in the respiratory therapy department at the University of Illinois and completed his Master's degree in Health Professions Education, then moved to Mobile in 1980 to be the Director of Clinical Education at the University of South Alabama. In 1988, he completed his Ed.D. in educational administration from Auburn University.

In addition to university duties, the "Breath of Life" program at the Victory Family Practice Clinic for uninsured adults is staffed by Tim and other USA CRC faculty and students. Tim earned the AE-C credential in preparation for duties at the Victory Clinic. At the clinic, patients are referred to the program by one of the physicians or nurse practitioners, and are then examined, have spirometry, then receive an asthma or COPD plan of care. The Victory Clinic program has seen well over 500 patients with COPD and over 200 patients with asthma since its inception. Rarely is there an exacerbation requiring hospitalization, which is very important for those without insurance.

Dr. Op't Holt has been active with the Association of Asthma Educators, serving as president in 2009.

### **Karen S. Rance, DNP, RN, CPNP, AE-C**

Dr. Rance is an allergy, asthma, and immunology specialty NP who received her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from the University of Virginia. She is in private practice at Allergy Partners of Central Indiana in Indianapolis, Indiana. Dr. Rance is also a clinical researcher at Research Center of Indiana and adjunct faculty at Indiana Wesleyan University.

Dr. Rance is the 2004 and 2011 recipient of the Allied

Health Award for outstanding clinical project from the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology. She has presented at multiple national conferences on the topic of allergy and asthma, and regularly speaks to a broad spectrum of health care provider audiences on the topic of allergy and asthma. She has authored manuscripts for numerous medical journals including *the Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, *Journal of Asthma and Allergy Educators*, *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, and *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

Dr. Rance serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Certified Asthma Educators and is on the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHBLI) National Asthma Education Prevention Program Expert Panel (NAEPP) workgroup. She is the Founding Chair of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners' (NAPNAP) and Allergy Special Interest Group and on NAPNAP's Clinical Expert Panel for Asthma.

She is involved in many community support programs, including the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition and the Asthma Alliance of Indianapolis. Dr. Rance has traveled extensively in support of international medical missions.

### **Doctor: Are YOU Asthma Educator (AE-C) Worthy?**

Randall Brown, MD MPH AE-C

Asthma is a complex multi-factorial chronic illness that affects over 25 million Americans. Therapeutic approaches vary depending upon many clinical elements including levels of severity, control and the quality of the doctor-patient interaction. Given that the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report highlights asthma as an expensive and deadly disease that accounts for nearly one-half million hospitalizations, 2 million emergency department visits and nine million disease-related doctor visits per year, the question is begged: why can't we doctors in America do a better job?

Whether as primary or specialty care physicians, doctors often lead the charge against asthma. In medical offices, hospitals or other clinical venues, what we say to asthma patients and their families is vital to asthma education and care. Despite the scientific understanding that asthma is predominantly a chronic disease of inflammation within the small airways of the lungs, the intermittent nature of its symptoms and the often troublesome behavioral nuances of management make asthma every bit as much an illness of communication and education. The quality of the illness management "road map" that doctors teach will therefore have lasting implication-and clearly affect the public health status

of asthma in the United States.

Since 2002, the mission of the National Asthma Educator Certification Board (NAECB) is to promote optimal asthma management and quality of life among individuals, their families and communities by advancing excellence in asthma education through the asthma educator (AE-C) process. Unfortunately, physicians represent only 1% of the over 4000 AE-C active certificants. If asthma training in medical schools and residencies were mandated to be comprehensive and NIH asthma guideline specific, one might think "extra" training and testing would be superfluous. If the components of the NAECB's certification exam--the asthma condition, patient and family assessment, asthma management, and organizational issues--were core curriculae for physician CME across the country, maybe the potential for doctor involvement in the AE-C process would mean little. And, if asthma control were stellar in the United States, namely far better than that for our 71% of asthma patients in the US who are less than optimally managed, then this article may not have needed to be written.

Sadly, none of the hypotheticals as described in the above paragraph are fact...and, for the sake of our own profession and the 25 million Americans with asthma whom we treat, as physicians we must be responsible for taking immediate action. Where and how? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Whereas 70-80% of asthma patients will not visit asthma specialist physicians, every primary care practice in the US should have at least one asthma educator-certified physician. The NAECB examination should count toward maintenance of certification (MOC) primary care physician educational credit and considered where efforts exist to provide certified disease management quality improvement within organizations.
2. All primary care education programs should offer trainees the opportunity to become an AE-C by the end of their respective pediatrics, family medicine, or internal medicine residencies.
3. Pulmonology (adult or pediatric), Allergy and Immunology, and ENT fellowships should mandate that all graduates achieve their AE-C at the

time of their program graduation. Not only do these asthma specialists have a need to do well within their own disciplines, arguably they will have a greater impact on asthma care as they discuss asthma in their communities with medical professionals and organizations who diagnose and treat the vast majority of a region's asthma patients.

This said, the Asthma Certification Examination is not easy. It is a 3-hour, 175 question test that requires a firm grasp on all asthma clinical, behavioral and educational issues. This physician-having also taken certification examinations in primary (pediatrics) and specialty (pediatric pulmonology) care-felt t he test to be more than fair for physician examinees. It encompasses knowledge of aspects of asthma care that all physicians should possess, yet some do not-as evidenced by the approximately 20% fail rate among first-time physician examinees.

Many have astutely surmised that if we as physicians are not part of the asthma solution in America, then we represent a critical component of the problem. So Doctor...once again, are you Asthma Educator (AE-C) worthy?

Randall Brown, MD MPH AE-C

Co-Author and Director, Physician Asthma Care Education Programs

Center for Managing Chronic Disease

University of Michigan

**Helpful Links**

[Exam Info And Registration](#)

[Review Classes](#)

[Candidate Handbook](#)

[FAQ's](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

## NAECB Members

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Promoting Excellence in Asthma Education

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