Asthma Action Plans: Developing a Community Wide Asthma Action Plan

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Overview

- Presentation
  - Why written asthma action plans (AAPs)?
  - How can we better communicate AAPs?
  - How is the NHLBI working with stakeholders to develop a strategy for improving the use of AAPs?

- Discussion
  - What is working and not working with AAPs?
  - What can we collectively do to promote AAPs?
What is a Written Asthma Action?

- An individualized self-management plan, developed by the provider and patient, that includes instructions for:
  - Daily management of asthma
  - Recognizing and handling worsening asthma

- Aims to achieve and maintain asthma control (reduce impairment and risk)

- Uses peak flow or symptom-based monitoring, or both

- Reviewed and refined in follow-up visits that reinforce use of the AAP
Why Use Written Asthma Action Plans?

- Makes self-management education more effective (versus no AAP) in reducing hospitalizations and ED visits
- Empowers patients and families to self-manage asthma, with help from provider
- Guides asthma care at school, extended care, or camp, including whether student may self-administer medication
About 1 in 12 people (25 million) have asthma and half of them had at least one asthma attack in 2008.

Fewer than half of children and adults with asthma have been given a written AAP.
“Provide all patients with a written AAP that includes instructions for (1) daily management of asthma and (2) recognizing and handling worsening asthma.”*

- Written AAPs are particularly important for patients who have moderate or severe persistent asthma, a history of severe exacerbations, or poorly controlled asthma.

How Do You Communicate AAPs?

“To improve communication, AAPs need to be written clearly and implemented on many levels.”*

- Offer AAP choices by age or setting (schools, workplace, childcare centers)
- Use AAPs to coordinate asthma care across multiple caregivers and as link between community and clinical sites
- Communicate the policies that guide use of AAPs at various points of care to reinforce their use

“Every effort should be made to discuss asthma care, especially the asthma action plan, in the patient’s native language so that educational messages are fully understood.” (EPR-3, 2007)

Consider your audience, for example:

- For some ethnic groups, the word “action” may need more explanation
- Literacy, healthy literacy
- Language barriers
- Readability of AAP (poor print quality or fuzzy graphics)
The NHLBI Asthma Action Plan

- Three-zone format (green, yellow, and red)
- Symptoms and/or peak flow, if peak flow meter used
- Includes things you can do to avoid your asthma triggers on reverse side
Promoting Use of AAPs: NHLBI Publications

- My Asthma Wallet Card
- Asthma & Physical Activity in the School (coming soon)
- Is the AAP Working?--A Tool for School Nurse Assessment

- Related tools on how to:
  - Use Your Peak Flow Meter
  - Use Your Metered-Dose Inhaler
  - Use Your Dry Powder Inhaler
  - Control Things That Make Your Asthma Worse
Promoting Use of AAPs: NHLBI Video

- Living With and Managing Asthma Video

NHLBI Disease and Conditions Index Videos
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/videos
Promoting Use of AAPs: NHLBI Latino Asthma Manual (in development)
Information-gathering activities to date:

- Conducted literature review and gap analysis
- Met with NAEPP AAP Ad Hoc Working Group
- Reviewed lessons learned from current NHLBI-funded projects with AAP interventions
- Held focus groups with Latino parents
- And now…
Questions for Discussion
For Discussion: Barriers and Challenges

- What do you perceive to be the barriers to implementing or using written asthma action plans by specific audiences?
  - Providers/Clinicians
  - Patients and families
  - Schools and childcare centers
  - Health care systems

- What have you found to be effective in getting them to use AAPs?
For Discussion: Asthma Disparities

- Are there differences or additional barriers in the use of written asthma action plans among racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse audiences?
For Discussion: Promising Approaches

- What community based organizations or systems have you found or identified to be most effective at utilizing written asthma action plans?
- Are these models that could benefit from national action, that is, engaging national organizations to support, expand, and/or build upon local efforts?
Do you have any specific reactions and/or have you heard feedback on the current NHLBI AAP? How would you modify it?
Thank you.