

Asthma Community Network – Conversations for Advancing Action Podcast Series

Episode Transcript

Episode 7 – Making an Impact Locally to Get Recognized Nationally

Narrator: Welcome to “Asthma Community Network – Conversations for Advancing Action” –a podcast series from AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org - an online Network designed for people committed to improving asthma outcomes in their community. This podcast series is designed to share best practices for reducing the impact of asthma through delivery of comprehensive, community-based care, especially in underserved communities. In these podcasts you’ll learn about strategies for managing effective program delivery systems, addressing environmental triggers, and leveraging community assets through partnerships.

Today, we’ll discuss the National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management, and how it benefited a program in New York City.

Dr. Adriana Matiz: It’s an opportunity to reflect on what you’re doing and even the application process, in itself, is almost therapeutic. It’s saying, okay let me put this on paper. Let’s see what we’re doing, and whoa – look at what we’re doing. And then ultimately to have somebody reward you for that and really be able to provide you, again, sort of national level support, there’s really nothing, nothing else like that, that I could imagine.

Narrator: That’s Dr. Adriana Matiz, Medical Director for the Washington Heights-Inwood Network for Asthma Program in New York City. Known as WIN for Asthma, the program serves families of children ages 0 to 18 with high-risk asthma in Washington Heights, Inwood and West Harlem in northern Manhattan.

Since its inception in 2006, WIN for Asthma has enrolled more than 900 families of children with poorly controlled asthma. The community-based community health workers offer comprehensive asthma education, home visits, a home environmental assessment, trigger reduction tips, referrals for clinical and social services, and on-going support.

And the results? Among all program graduates to date, hospitalizations decreased by 65 percent, emergency department visits decreased by 54 percent, and nearly 100 percent of caregivers report feeling in-control of their child’s asthma, according to Patricia Peretz, WIN for Asthma’s Manager of Community Health and Evaluation..

Patricia Peretz: We’re here to help families control their child’s asthma. And given all of the competing obstacles and the other circumstances in this community it’s really amazing to know that after a year with our program, families feel that they can properly manage their child’s asthma. And our goal isn’t to do anything for the families, we’re here to give the families the tools and resources they need to manage their child’s asthma, both in the short term and the long term. Another goal of ours is to connect the families to both the clinical resources and social resources so that they again can use those

resources in the short-term, but also throughout their lives and to improve the quality of life for them and for their families.

Narrator: WIN for Asthma, like so many asthma programs, offers a model of what is needed to close the gap in racial and ethnic asthma disparities. Currently, among children with asthma, black children are more than twice as likely than white children to have an emergency department visit or hospitalization. WIN for Asthma has solutions that address this. They have a great story to tell and found a great way to tell it: by submitting an entry for the National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management. Each year, U.S. EPA honors exceptional health plans, health care providers and communities who deliver excellent environmental asthma management as part of their comprehensive asthma care services. These programs reflect the strategies and key drivers of program effectiveness as demonstrated in EPA’s Asthma Change Package.

This is the only national asthma award program, and Patricia Peretz and Dr. Matiz felt applying for the award would enable WIN for Asthma to show its community that the program was achieving success worthy of national attention.

Dr. Matiz explains:

Dr. Adriana Matiz: For us it was an opportunity to say what we had done. And it really share that we our community. And were we to receive the award, for us it was a moment of pride to say to our community, to our institution that we’ve received recognition about the work that we’ve done and we knew that we came to work every day and we were doing, doing wonderful work for our community, but for us it was important to say this is bigger than just a little local program and it’s because we really knew that there was meaning behind what we were doing, we were feeling it, it was palpable.

Narrator: The key to winning the National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management is to demonstrate that your comprehensive asthma management program meets four criteria:

1. It embodies the System for Delivering High-Quality Asthma Care – including the key drivers of program effectiveness – as described in the Asthma Change Package on AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org.
2. It promotes the integration of the National Institutes of Health’s Guidelines for the Diagnosis of Management of Asthma throughout the continuum of care;
3. It includes a robust environmental component; and
4. It achieves positive health and financial outcomes.

Patricia Peretz said when WIN for Asthma looked at the criteria, they felt they had a winning entry.

Patricia Peretz: We applied for the award because we feel that we have very strong outcomes and it was actually after looking at the change package that we realized that we that we’ve already implemented a lot of what is already recommended. And we just felt that we would be a good fit.

Narrator: They were right. WIN for Asthma was one of five recipients of the award at the Communities in Action National Asthma Forum in 2010. As a Leadership Award winner, WIN for Asthma gained national recognition at the Forum and opened a channel for ongoing communication with other leading programs across the country about the latest innovations in asthma management. It also provided everyone involved in the program with a great emotional boost. Patricia Peretz:

Patricia Peretz: Winning the award has been very exciting for all of us – for our program staff, for our partners, for the hospital, and has really raised the profile of the program but in the community and in the hospital. In fact, to this day, people still come up to me and congratulate me upon receiving the award.

Narrator: Dr. Luz Matiz:

Dr. Adriana Matiz: I think, at broader level beyond our local city level has been important to us because, you know, different parts of the country do things differently and learning from us, having support on topics that might come up or questions that we might have is really an opportunity for a program such as our own to really be part of something – it’s really like saying taking our network and really networking at a much higher level. And for us I think that’s important, it’s where we were ready for that next step.

Patricia Peretz: For programs who are considering applying for the award, I would encourage them to visit the change package and to really look through. I’m sure they’ll find that they’ve already implemented a lot of what is recommended and it will really help them frame their success.

Narrator: For more information about applying to the National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management, visit AsthmaAwards.info.

To hear other podcasts in this series, visit asthmacommunitynetwork.org/podcasts.

And for more information on asthma management, go to AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org – an online Network for people committed to improving asthma outcomes in their community.