UChicago Medicine

Partnering to Improve Childhood Asthma

Asthma is one of the most common chronic health conditions affecting children, and Chicago is among the most severely impacted urban areas—with asthma hospitalization rates nearly twice the national average. After UChicago Medicine’s Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) revealed this critical issue, the hospital partnered with LaRabida Children’s Hospital, St. Bernard Hospital and Friend Family Health Center to form the South Side Pediatric Asthma Center (SSPAC).

SSPAC aims to reduce the burden of asthma for children and families by developing a collaborative, innovative and high-quality system of care for pediatric asthma management. SSPAC works to improve health outcomes for children with asthma by:

- Facilitating access to care;
- Promoting standardized asthma treatment and management; and
- Deploying Community Health Workers to educate children and caregivers to recognize signs and symptoms, properly use medication, and recognize and manage asthma triggers.

Nearly 20 percent of school-aged children on Chicago’s south side suffer from asthma, compared to 12 percent nationwide. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of school-age children miss school for asthma-related reasons.

For children enrolled in SSPAC, early outcomes show positive results:

- 30 percent reduction in daytime and nighttime symptoms;
- 32 percent reduction in emergency department visits; and
- 40 percent reduction in missed school days.

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