

## CHAMPLAIN HEALTH PARTNERS STRENGTHEN LUNG HEALTH SERVICES, BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS

*Champlain Local Health Integration Network and Champlain Lung Health Network  
Promote Diagnostic Tool, Lung Patient Guide, and New Services*

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

### NEWS

The Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the Champlain Lung Health Network are promoting a simple breathing test and a new lung patient guide to help asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) patients who are caught in a cycle of repeated emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Spirometry is a quick and simple test used to diagnose asthma in older children, teens, and adults, and to diagnose COPD. Spirometry can assess the severity of airway inflammation or obstruction. Individuals with reduced lung function due to poorly controlled asthma or COPD can't breathe out as much air as someone who doesn't have lung disease.

The two networks are also publicizing *Breathing Easier – A Guide for Asthma and COPD Patients in the Champlain Region*. This new, innovative tool is designed to help patients in the Champlain region access health education, rehabilitation, smoking cessation, oxygen therapy, financial assistance, home care, and palliative care services.

In addition, several Community Health Centres and Family Health Team clinics across the Champlain region now offer the Primary Care Asthma Program. Also, the Queensway Carleton Hospital recently opened a COPD clinic.

### QUOTES

"Patients who have better control over their lung disease are less likely to require emergency room treatment or hospital admission," said Dr. Robert Cushman, CEO of the Champlain LHIN.

"Historically, lung health services haven't received the attention they deserve, so it's important to improve education, diagnosis, and treatment."

"I struggled with poorly controlled asthma for too many years. It was frustrating because I didn't know where to turn for help," said Carmela Graziani, author of *Breathing Easier – A Guide for Asthma and COPD Patients in the Champlain Region*. "I wrote this guide to help other patients navigate the local health care system and find the resources that they need so that they can better manage their lung disease and breathe easier."

“By the time we see asthma or COPD patients for spirometry testing, their lung disease is well advanced,” said Laurie Taylor, Registered Respiratory Therapist, Certified Respiratory Educator, and Lung Health Coordinator at the Somerset West Community Health Centre. “Primary care providers can help to prevent permanent lung damage, disability and early death among lung patients by referring them to spirometry testing at the first sign of symptoms.”

## QUICK FACTS – ASTHMA

- In 2007, 9.6% of Champlain residents 12 years of age and older reported that they had been diagnosed with asthma, compared to 8.1% of Ontario residents overall.<sup>1</sup>
- According to the Champlain LHIN, asthma accounts for more than 50,000 general practitioner and family physician visits and 4,600 emergency department visits per year among Champlain residents.
- According to the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, asthma exacerbations are a significant cause of emergency department visits.
- In 2002, only 7% of patients between 11 and 40 years of ages who lived in the Champlain region and who were newly diagnosed with asthma had spirometry testing within a year. This figure is comparable to the Ontario average.<sup>2</sup>
- Studies show that 60% of Canadians with asthma do not have their symptoms under control.<sup>3</sup>

## QUICK FACTS – COPD

- COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in Canada.<sup>4</sup> However, doctors project that COPD will be the third leading cause of death in Canada and around the world by the year 2020 due to the number of aging baby boomers who smoke or who have smoked.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3% of residents in the Champlain region between 30 and 44 years of age reported having COPD, while 9% of residents 75 years of age and older reported having COPD.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey (2007). www.statcan.gc.ca

<sup>2</sup> ICES Intool. www.intool.ices.on.ca

<sup>3</sup> Asthma Society of Canada. Special Information Supplement: Asthma Patient Bill of Rights. 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. Deaths by selected grouped causes, sex and geography – Canada, Mortality, Summary List of Causes – 2003. [www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/84F0209XIE/2003000/t001\\_en.pdf](http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/84F0209XIE/2003000/t001_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Lung Association. www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc/what-quoi/index\_e.php

<sup>6</sup> Bains N, Dall K, Hohenadel J. Chronic Conditions in the Champlain LHIN: Health System Intelligence Project. Queens Printer for Ontario. 2007.

- The rate of COPD among patients 35 years of age and older who live in the Eastern Counties and in Renfrew County is double the rate of COPD in the City of Ottawa.<sup>7</sup> The smoking rates in these parts of the Champlain region are almost double the smoking rates in the City of Ottawa.<sup>8</sup>
- According to the Queensway Carleton Hospital, COPD exacerbations are the number one reason for repeated emergency room visits and hospital admissions.
- According to the Champlain LHIN, COPD accounts for about 24,000 general practitioner and family physician visits, 7,000 emergency department visits, 2,300 hospitalizations and 300 deaths per year among Champlain residents.

## LEARN MORE

Learn more about lung health services and download a copy of *Breathing Easier* at [Champlain Lung Health Network](#).

To order hard copies of the guide free-of-charge in either English or French, please email [champlain@lhins.on.ca](mailto:champlain@lhins.on.ca) or call 1-866-902-5446.

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<sup>7</sup> Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. Champlain LHIN Report: Treated Prevalence Rates of Chronic Conditions Using the Johns Hopkins Adjusted Clinical Groups (ACG) Case-Mix System.  
[www.ices.on.ca/file/Chronic\\_Conditions\\_lhin11\\_May08.ppt](http://www.ices.on.ca/file/Chronic_Conditions_lhin11_May08.ppt)

<sup>8</sup> Champlain LHIN's Community of Care Profiles. [www.champlainlhin.on.ca](http://www.champlainlhin.on.ca)