

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 3, 2013

World Asthma Day Event and Press Conference

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Press Conference

Tuesday, May 7, 2013, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

St. Rose Hospital, Front Entrance, 27200 Calaroga Ave, Hayward, CA

Take Control of Asthma by Taking Control of Indoor Environments

Alameda County, California, May 3, 2013 –

The *Alameda County Asthma Coalition* is joining countries all over the world on May 7th, 2013 to raise awareness about asthma and how to control and prevent asthma symptoms. [World Asthma Day](#) will highlight the importance of taking action to address this chronic illness that seriously affects too many of our children and families.

The Problem of Asthma

Asthma is a serious chronic disease that affects the airways that carry air in and out of your lungs. During an asthma attack, swelling, mucus and narrowing of the airways make it extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to breathe. Asthma causes limitations in children's activities, school absences and a risk of death.

Worldwide it is estimated there are over 300 million people with asthma. In the US, one in 12 Americans has asthma and the prevalence is even higher for African-Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control, chronic respiratory diseases, such as asthma, rank among the top five causes of death. It is therefore extremely important that we raise awareness and eliminate known asthma triggers in our environment.

Alameda County has the 3rd highest rate of hospitalizations from asthma of the 52 counties in California. Hayward has the second highest number of emergency department visits due to asthma overall and the second-highest number of children under five years of age who visit the emergency department due to asthma. Hayward is second only to Oakland. St. Rose Hospital in Hayward, is particularly affected by a high volume of Emergency Department visits from children with asthma.

The Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement created the [Breathmobile®](#), a custom-built mobile pediatric asthma and allergy clinic that provides on-going asthma and allergy care. Working with local schools, the Breathmobile® has proven successful in providing case management for low-income children and reducing the frequency and severity of their asthma. The Breathmobile® will be on site Tuesday for you to take tour.

Causes of Asthma Attacks

Being located so close to the Oakland Port and the 880 freeway where many of the large trucks travel, we know that Alameda County residents are exposed to toxins and pollutants that can lead to an asthma attack.

Perhaps an even larger cause of the high rates of asthma and asthma attacks is our indoor environment.

Between all the time we spend at home, in school or at work, not to mention in our cars or on public transportation, we spend a majority of our lives indoors. Areas of Alameda County have some of the worst housing conditions in the country. There are many triggers in our indoor environment including but not limited to poor ventilation, candles, perfumes, potpourri, incense, air fresheners or scented plug-ins, pets with fur or feathers, roaches and rodents, toxic art supplies, paints, adhesives, solvents, mold, mildew, dampness, condensation, or leaks, toxic cleaning products, and tobacco smoke.

Activities and Highlights of World Asthma Day in Hayward

Join us for the latest information and community action at the World Asthma Day Event and Press conference on Tuesday May 7th at St. Rose Hospital in Hayward.

Learn about an important legislative bill, [SB488 \(Hueso\)](#) currently making its way through the Senate in Sacramento that would give authority to local code enforcement officers, as needed, to identify and cite for pest infestations. This is an important step towards improving housing conditions that contribute to asthma attacks.

* Speakers will include:

- Dr. Washington Burns, MD, Alameda County Asthma Coalition and Executive Director of the Prescott- Joseph Center for Community Enhancement
- Francisco Zermeño, Hayward City Council Member
- Mark Salinas, Hayward City Council Member
- Garrett Contreras, Hayward Fire Chief
- Michael Cobb, Executive Director, St. Rose Hospital Foundation

* Local parents and children speaking out!

* The Breathmobile® will be on site for you to take a tour!

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The *Alameda County Asthma Coalition* is a group of professionals and community members advocating for increased awareness, effective medical care, and reduction of asthma triggers. Members include representatives of the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and Healthy Homes Project, Children's Hospital of Oakland, Regional Asthma Management and Prevention, American Lung Association, West Oakland Asthma Coalition, Ethnic Health Institute, Alameda County Public Health Department Asthma Start Program, Kaiser Permanente, La Clinica de la Raza, Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement, and many other local medical and community groups.