

In this issue...

- Faces of Asthma: Respiratory therapist
- Support and education group begins
- Asthma and depression

Airways

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· The Rockford Asthma Consortium is part of the Respiratory Disease Task Force of the Rockford Health Council.

· The mission of the Rockford Asthma Consortium is to reduce morbidity and mortality and enhance the quality of life for people with asthma living in Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties.

· The Rockford Asthma Consortium is made up of individuals and representatives of institutions and organizations interested in asthma.

· For more information about the Rockford Asthma Consortium or any of its activities, please contact the Rockford Health Council at 395-5701.

· This newsletter is funded by a grant from the Asthma Community Collaborative Implementation Initiative of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The Faces of Asthma: Jim Sills, R. T.

“The Faces of Asthma” is an introduction to some of the people whose personal or professional lives are touched by asthma. If you have a suggestion for a “face” you’d like to see here, please get in touch.

If you’ve ever been admitted to the hospital for asthma or been seen in the emergency room for it, you’ve probably encountered a respiratory therapist like Jim Sills.

About his connection to asthma, Jim says, “As a respiratory therapist I have worked with many asthma patients. I have seen the effects of the disease and how it affects patients and their families. It has

been exciting to see how our better understanding of the disease has led to the development of more and better medications and strategies to help manage it.”

Jim earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He worked as a respiratory therapist for six years in Michigan.

Although Jim is a registered respiratory therapist, you’re more likely to find him at Rock Valley College: Jim came to RVC in 1979 to teach in the Respiratory Care program, and became the academic chair of that program in

1981. Since then, he’s earned a Master of Education degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

At Rock Valley, Jim teaches courses in normal cardiopulmonary anatomy and physiology, which is the structure and function of the heart and lungs; pharmacology, which is medication and how and when to use it; and cardiopulmonary pathology, or the diseases and problems of the heart and lungs. Jim says, “Through these three courses, I try to integrate an understanding of what asthma is all about.”

The Rockford Asthma Consortium’s Education and Support Group has begun!

Learn to manage your asthma or your child’s asthma and meet other people who have asthma!

**Upcoming meetings are
Thursday, 2 December**

and

Tuesday, 4 January;

6:30-8:00 PM at Swedish-American Hospital.

For questions or suggestions about this publication, please contact Stuart Tousman at stousman@aol.com or Sara Powell at polyglot@core.com.

This publication is a product of the Rockford Asthma Consortium's Education Committee. Its intent is to encourage a partnership between asthma patients and their families and health care providers; it is not intended to replace the care and advice of medical professionals.

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c/o Rockford Health Council
1601 Parkview Ave
Rockford IL 61107

News:

`Twas the season...

For sneezing and wheezing! Ragweed season begins in the middle of August and runs through October. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, ragweed grows in both urban and rural areas and the pollen grains can travel up to 400 miles. For pollen counts in your area, visit the National Allergy Bureau at www.aaaai.org/nab.

Expert help is just a phone call away.

The American Lung Association of Illinois-Iowa operates a national Call Center for reliable, accurate information on lung health. The staff—registered nurses and respiratory therapists--can answer almost any lung health question, including questions about COPD, asthma, and smoking cessation. Interpreters are available for non-English-speaking callers. **The American Lung Association of Illinois-Iowa Call Center is open Monday-Friday, 7 AM - 7 PM at (800) 548-8252.** You can also e-mail the Call Center at Questions@lungil.org, or send your questions through the American Lung Association's website: www.lungilia.org.

**You can now find the
Rockford Asthma Consortium on-line!
Our website is still partially under
construction, but it has links to some
outstanding sites for asthma information.**

**Go to:
www.rockfordasthmaconsortium.org:**

**Let us know what you think of the site
and what you'd like to see on it.**

Asthma and Depression

By Stuart Tousman, Ph.D.,
professor of psychology at
Rockford College, and
Howard J. Zeitz, M.D.,
University of Illinois College of
Medicine at Rockford.

The relationship of psychology to asthma dates back to research in the 1950's, which stated that children with asthma substitute wheezing for crying because they fear that crying would result in a loss of their mother's love. Obviously, we have come a long way in the diagnosis and treatment of asthma since the 1950's!

We now know that asthma is due to inflammation of the airways and constriction of the muscles around the airways.

Pharmaceutical research has revolutionized the treatment of asthma: The main medical treatment for persistent asthma is controller medication, including products such as Advair, Flovent, Pulmicort, and Singulair. An issue that is still studied by psychologists and asthma researchers is the relationship between asthma and depression. Some research indicates that 50% of patients with

asthma may have depression.

Depression is diagnosed when five or more of the following symptoms are present during a two-week period:

1. Depressed mood;
2. Markedly diminished interest in activities;
3. Significant weight loss or weight gain;
4. Insomnia (not able to sleep) or hypersomnia (sleeping too much);
5. Slowed reflexes;
6. Fatigue;
7. Feelings of worthlessness;
8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate;
9. Recurrent thoughts of death.

Depression has been linked to low levels of a neurotransmitter called serotonin. Medications such as Paxil, Prozac, and Zoloft work by increasing serotonin levels in the brain and help many individuals with depression. Counselors frequently use stress management programs, individual counseling, family counseling, and

support groups to assist individuals in dealing with asthma. In stress management programs, individuals learn how to do deep breathing so that emotions do not trigger an asthma episode. In individual counseling and family counseling, individuals discuss how asthma affects their emotions, moods, and day-to-day activities. The counselor attempts to work with the individual to create a better life.

To help people understand the medical and emotional issues associated with asthma, the Rockford Asthma Consortium is forming an **education and support group** for adults with asthma and parents of children with asthma. We will meet the first and third Thursdays of each month from 6:30-8:00 PM. We'll gather in conference room D of Swedish-American Hospital (near the cafeteria on the fourth floor).

*This is YOUR group:
Come be part of providing
what YOU need in terms
of asthma education.*