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IMPACT DC: 2017 Annual Report

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Stephen Teach, MD, MPH
Director and Principal Investigator, IMPACT DC
Phone: 202.476.5134
Email: steach@childrensnational.org

Marian Brodsky
Senior Director of Development
Children’s Hospital Foundation
Phone: 301.565.8533
Email: mbrodsky@childrensnational.org

IMPACT DC Website:
www.childrensnational.org/impactdc
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Deborah Quint Shelef, MPH, is Program Director of IMPACT DC. Ms. Quint Shelef has 15 years of experience overseeing a large portfolio of pediatric asthma care, translational research, outreach, and education focused on at-risk urban children and adolescents. This has included coordinating a broad range of clinical research studies, as well as rigorous processes of stakeholder engagement and collaborative intervention development.

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The Impact of Philanthropy

In 2017, Improving Pediatric Asthma Care in the District of Columbia (IMPACT DC) enhanced its presence in the community, strategically adapting efforts to address unmet needs. Asthma is the leading, serious chronic illness among children in across the county, and accounts for 14 million absences from school each year. Asthma is also the third-ranking cause of childhood hospitalizations under the age of 15.

IMPACT DC is a game changer. This award-winning program has created more effective ways to reach kids affected by asthma and engage them and their families in preventative care so that every child has the promise of a stronger, healthier future.

**2017 AT A GLANCE: IMPACT DC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLINICAL CARE</th>
<th>Provided <strong>1,370 NEW PATIENTS</strong> with asthma care, for a total of 1,586 patients. This was a <strong>39% INCREASE</strong> in new patient visits in Southeast DC.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY</td>
<td>Participated in <strong>78 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION EVENTS</strong> including training <strong>225-childcare providers</strong> reaching nearly <strong>2,200 children</strong></td>
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<td>PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION</td>
<td>Trained <strong>1,200 HEALTH PROFESSIONALS</strong> on optimal asthma management</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESEARCH</td>
<td>Published <strong>13 MANUSCRIPTS</strong> and <strong>REMAINED 90%</strong> of research participants</td>
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CLINICAL CARE: DELIVERING THE HIGHEST QUALITY SERVICE TO CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA

Rushing to the emergency room for an asthma attack is traumatic and disruptive for the child and family. It is also often preventable. Through diverse partnerships, improved processes, and targeted resources, IMPACT DC has taught more and more children and their support networks the fundamentals of good asthma care. The results are impressive. We reduce emergency department visits and hospitalizations, and we improve quality of life—our kids are happier and healthier.

Expanding our Reach

The heart of this program is the IMPACT DC Asthma Clinic where patients receive detailed medical consultations and individualized treatment plans that are then coordinated with primary care providers, school nurses, and other caregivers. In 2016, we opened a third location at the Children’s Health Center Anacostia, more commonly known as “The Big Chair.” This was the first time we replicated our emergency department-based model in a primary care setting, and it was a success. We saw a 39 percent increase in new patient visits conducted in Southeast DC. Building off this momentum, IMPACT DC plans to expand further into Ward 8, anticipating a new clinic site at the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) in early 2018.

Targeting Resources for Effective Care

In October 2016, IMPACT DC completed an assessment of asthma needs, barriers to care, and provider and patient preference. It showed that asthma disproportionately affects those living in high areas of poverty [see Appendix A]. Our findings have since informed what resources we provide families, how providers communicate with one another to ensure continuity of care for mutual patients, and, lastly, where we target our assistance. It has also helped us to identify and cultivate partnerships that tailor clinic services to specific community needs. For example, we recently sought out and won a BUILD grant (Bold, Upstream, Integrated, Local, and Data-driven) to enhance our work with Children’s Law Center to target substandard housing conditions that drastically impact asthma morbidity.

“
It’s very upsetting to watch your child go through an asthma attack, to watch him try to catch his breath and cry at the same time. Before IMPACT DC, he didn’t want to take his medications. We were at the ER two or three times a week, missing 22 days last school year. But now, he thinks you guys are so cool that he does what you say, and we don’t need to go to the ER.

- Charday Eury,
IMPACT DC parent

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Increasing Referrals

More and more families access the life-changing services of IMPACT DC because of our strong, diverse partnerships and improved processes. All four DC Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO) refer patients through a standardized process coordinated by the Department of Healthcare Finance, a process we continue to evaluate in order to increase the yield of referrals. We have also made it easier for primary care physicians to refer patients through the electronic medical record, allowing for real-time scheduling with IMPACT DC. Lastly, with funding from the Child Health Board, we enhanced systems through which families schedule clinic appointments while attending community events.

Securing Financial Sustainability

IMPACT DC pursues diverse funding streams to promote the operational and financial sustainability of our core program activities. We maintain unique contracts with the DC Medicaid MCOs including enhanced fee-for-service payments and shared savings bonuses. The Department of Health Care Finance is highly engaged in evaluating and enhancing these efforts, and we continue to explore opportunities for future reimbursement strategies that align with our population health goals.

Highlighting Patient and Parent Voices

Evolving from the success of the parental engagement efforts funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), IMPACT DC launched the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) [See Appendix B]. The PAC aims to follow core principles of reciprocal relationships, shared learning, partnerships, transparency, honesty, and trust. Those serving on PAC provide a crucial perspective as we develop new programmatic initiatives. “We are a board of patient families who serve as consultants,” said Tiara Cuthbertson, Patient Partner and Caregiver. “We help to inform patient-centered treatments and research for asthma. We are not shy. We have no problem giving them our feedback.”

Through diverse partnerships, improved processes, and targeted resources, IMPACT DC continues to see growth in the number of kids reached. Up from 2016, we saw 1,370 new patients in 2017.
Outreach: Raising Awareness

Community education and outreach is essential to the program’s success which is why IMPACT DC maintains a strong presence throughout the year at health fairs, school-based programs, and other educational and advocacy events. In FY 2017, IMPACT DC participated in 12 community-based health fairs, representing a 50 percent increase over the prior year. We prioritized events in areas of greatest need, with over half the events located east of the Anacostia River. Health fairs were hosted at sites located in high-risk areas of the District such as the United Medical Center, Children’s Health Center Anacostia, THEARC, Educare, and Excel Academy Public Charter School. Key events included:

Feast of Holiday Sharing: This large-scale event was held at the Convention Center and hosted by Unity Healthcare. Our participation occurred in collaboration with the Child Health Advocacy Institute with additional partner organizations in attendance.

Second Annual Family Fitness/Asthma Awareness Fun Day: In collaboration with Medstar, this health fair was held at Excel Academy Public Charter School. We hosted an interactive asthma class covering asthma physiology, asthma medication administration, and trigger management.
Education: On the Front Lines with Nurses and Care Providers

School nurses, teachers, and primary care providers are often in the position to be the first to identify and address health concerns related to asthma. With that in mind, IMPACT DC trains them to effectively respond to and proactively prevent asthma attacks. Children’s School Services (CSS) is our close partner in this initiative, and we are proud to be listed as an approved trainer to provide accredited asthma workshops for daycare and school staff working with young children. Key activities included:

Co-presented with CSS at the annual Children’s National Ambulatory Nursing Conference in April 2017. Our breakout session, School Nurses: Improving Asthma Outcomes in the School Setting, focused on the scope of asthma in DC schools, the asthma quality improvement initiatives CSS has undertaken in consult with IMPACT DC, and opportunities for nurses to expand their professional practice as certified asthma educators.

Conducted training session for all returning and incoming school nurses at the 2016 Summer Nurse Institute. Along with nurse educators from our Emergency Department, we provided an interactive, case-based presentation on asthma management in the school setting reaching approximately 200 DC school nurses. Later this year, we will return to participate in several more initiatives around medication use in schools and incorporating school absenteeism data in the clinical setting.

Led nine “Breathing Easy” workshops for 225 early childhood education professionals reaching nearly 2,200 children. With continued funding from Fight For Children and in close partnership with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, these workshops trained primary care providers to recognize and manage asthma, and reduce adverse environmental exposures. Recognizing the prevalence of Spanish-speaking participants, we translated this curriculum into Spanish as part of our ongoing partnership with Mary’s Center.

“When I was really little, and my parents didn’t know much about asthma, I would go to the hospital almost every month. That was really bad. But now we go once a year.”

- Noah, age 13, who missed 30-40 school days a year before IMPACT DC
Education: Medical Students and the Future of Asthma Care

Keeping children healthy is sometimes secondary in the minds of young medical students eager to cure the disease. Each year, IMPACT DC provides training opportunities to ensure that future doctors keep public health, including asthma prevention, as a primary objective of their career. Success of this initiative is essential to the longevity of IMPACT DC and the long-term health of the kids we serve. Key activities included:

**George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences Asthma Summit.** This multi-day clinical public health course brings together first-year medical students, patient families, and expert panelists to brainstorm novel approaches to eliminate asthma morbidity. This year, for the first time, it was held at THEARC, providing the more than 180 highly-engaged medical students a unique perspective on health issues in DC.

**Clinic Observation and Training Opportunities.** More than 80 trainees attended the IMPACT DC Asthma Clinic for a program orientation, “train the trainer” sessions for teaching kids how to use inhalers and other devices, and access to asthma education materials including IMPACT DC’s online videos. This effort aims to ensure their future patients are aware of, and have access to, IMPACT DC.

Advocacy: A Champion for a Cause

IMPACT DC remains an influential voice for all families impacted by asthma. In 2017, we participated in several events aimed at keeping asthma prevention and care as well as the health of low-income, disadvantaged children on the local policy agenda. For example, we testified at the Department of Health public hearing in January 2017. We presented to a congressional delegation—including Nancy Pelosi (D-CA, Minority Leader), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), and Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)—visiting Children’s National in June 2017, speaking to the importance of Medicaid as a children’s health insurance and IMPACT DC’s approach to improving asthma outcomes. And lastly, we continue to actively participate in the DC Asthma Coalition. Through these efforts and many more, we create a lasting foundation for the transformation of child health on the local, national, and global stage.
IMPACT DC strives to understand why so many children have asthma and to ultimately reduce the number of children who suffer from the disease. To that end, we study novel and translational means to intervene in the epidemic and to disseminate evidence-based best practices nationwide. Our program has expanded clinical research efforts, with both investigator-initiated local studies and multi-site national collaborations, including the following accomplishments and milestones:

- Completed a preliminary analysis of our large single-site study, “Breathe with Ease: A Unique Approach to Managing Stress (BEAMS).” Funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), this novel study aims to evaluate if and how a parent’s stress exacerbates their child’s asthma symptoms. We retained an extraordinary 90 percent of study participants through a 12-month follow-up. This study has been featured at local and national meetings, and we anticipate publishing the primary findings in the coming year.

- Began recruiting for the ORBEX study, a five-year, $2.8-million NIH grant supporting a randomized, placebo-controlled multicenter study assessing the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of Oral Bacterial Extract for the prevention of wheezing lower respiratory tract illness. This study enrolls infants without asthma, and aims to prevent the onset of the condition. It is the first primary prevention trial we have been involved in and has presented unique recruitment challenges to all participating sites.

- Enrolled in a new seven-year initiative launched by the NIH called, Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO). The ECHO program has replaced the former National Children’s Study, and aims to understand the effects of environmental exposures on child health and development. We will primarily advise on asthma measurement and share data from prior cohort studies.

- Continued to serve as a clinical site for the Inner-City Asthma Consortium (ICAC), a multi-center, multi-study consortium funded by the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the NIH. ICAC aims to study how the urban environment, allergens, and genetics interact with a child’s immune system to cause asthma. Findings will inform treatments to improve management. We remain active participants in three studies from 2017, and plan to enroll in two additional studies in 2018.

- Continued to participate in a multi-site prospective cohort study of severe bronchiolitis and risk of recurring wheezing, in collaboration with the Emergency Medicine Network (EMNet) at Massachusetts General Hospital. The study aims to understand the factors associated with increased risk of developing childhood asthma.
Philanthropic support is essential for making new discoveries that will dramatically improve the health and well-being of children. I am incredibly grateful for donations that have proven indispensable to advancing asthma care and management. Together, we make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many kids.

- Stephen Teach, MD, MPH
  Director and Principal Investigator,
  IMPACT DC
Appendix A: Emergency Department Visit Rate

The map below, left, shows the rate of ED visits made by children age 0-17 years to all DC hospitals. Of note, more than 85 percent of these visits are to the Children’s National Emergency Department (ED). The disparities are quite stark, with Southeast residents making more visits than Northwest residents. Our most recent data showed a twenty-fold disparity in the ED visit rate between the highest and lowest zip codes in the city. This data informed our decision to locate a new clinic in Southeast DC.

The geographic distribution of ED visits for asthma closely mirrors the city’s distribution of poverty, shown below, right.
Appendix B: Recognition for Parent Engagement Activities

Our approach to parent engagement has been published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, and has been highlighted by PCORI, including a video featuring one of our parent champions available on PCORI’s website. Interviews with Dr. Stephen Teach and research coordinator Naja Foushee are also available on the PCORI Vimeo channel.