

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 30, 2004

ASTHMA COALITION NAMES "ASTHMA CHAMPIONS" FOR 2004

The Cleveland County Asthma Coalition named six "Asthma Champions" at its December 2004 meeting. Three individuals and three businesses were honored with this distinction.

The individuals named include:

- ✓ **Lisa Ledford** is a parent of a child with asthma and coalition volunteer who responds to the Asthma Coalition Hotline to register individuals for the Basic Asthma Education Class, to answer questions about the Asthma Coalition and to provide information regarding community resources for individuals with asthma. Ms. Ledford also serves as the greeter for the Basic Asthma Education classes that are held at the Dover Foundation Family YMCA and shares her own experiences as the parent of a child with asthma with class participants. She is an advocate for asthma recognition and management.
- ✓ **Grace Bridges** is a registered respiratory therapist employed by Cleveland Home Health Agency and led an initiative to place a compressor/nebulizer unit in each of the 26 Cleveland County Schools. Units were delivered to each school along with personal instruction regarding their use. Nebulizers are an important part of asthma care for a child who is dealing with an asthma flare. Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Bridges, nebulizers are now available in each school setting.
- ✓ **Christopher Cerjan, MD** has demonstrated dedication and ongoing support of the Cleveland County Asthma Coalition's strategic educational goals. He willingly offers his expertise to the Basic Asthma Education classes conducted in English and Spanish and has supported the coalition in its efforts to expand asthma education in the community.

- ✓ **Medical Arts Pharmacy** pioneered a Nebulizer Loaner Program that is monitored by Steve Knapp for the pharmacy. Many children and adults who have asthma experience real challenges when they have a major asthma attack. With the cooperation of Medical Arts Pharmacy, the Cleveland County Asthma Coalition and medical providers in Cleveland County, patients in need of a compressor/nebulizer for medications during an asthma flare may borrow a unit for a week at no charge. Steve Knapp has been instrumental in the organization of this program, offering education to patients who require these units. To date, over 100 units have been loaned to families in Cleveland County.
- ✓ The **Cleveland Regional Medical Center Respiratory Care Unit** under the leadership of Kathy Wilkinson provide comprehensive instruction in device use (peak flow meters, spacers and nebulizers) and its proper care to patients at CRMC as well as to participants in the Basic Asthma Education classes. With peak flow meters and spacers in hand, each student in the Basic Asthma Education class leaves armed with new confidence and understanding of asthma management.
- ✓ The **Dover Foundation Family YMCA** has provided space for the Basic Asthma Education classes held on the third Thursday evening of each month in order to assure continuing education to individuals with asthma. The Dover YMCA offers two classroom spaces at no charge for the classes and provides staff support for the special Splash Out events held twice a year, offering children the opportunity to swim and learn that individuals with asthma can be physically active.

The Cleveland County Asthma Coalition was founded in spring 2002 in order to facilitate greater understanding of asthma and its effects on individuals and families. The Coalition is composed of thirty-five individuals representing various health services as well as parents and individuals who are diagnosed with asthma. Among the services provided by the Coalition are resource brochures to assist families in educating themselves about asthma and disease management, the Asthma Resource Telephone Line (704/484-5195) available 24 hours a day to respond to questions about asthma, sponsorship of the Basic Asthma Education classes, and

provision of continuing education opportunities for health care providers, school staff members, child care providers, parents and individuals diagnosed with asthma. Basic Asthma Education classes for 2005 are scheduled for January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19 and June 16. These classes will meet at the Dover Foundation Family YMCA at 6:00 p.m. There is a \$5.00 fee for each participating family and scholarships are available. A special class for Hispanics is scheduled for January 29 in the Auditorium at the Cleveland County Office Building on South Post Road. The Coalition, an affiliate of the Alliance for Health, meets regularly on the fourth Wednesday of each month at noon at the Cleveland County Health Department, 2nd floor conference room and welcomes new members. For more information about the activities of the Cleveland County Asthma Coalition, please contact the Asthma Resource Line at 704/484-5195.

For additional information, contact Anne Short at 704/484-5112.