



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRESSLER, MD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2015

15-020

Hawaii Department of Health Partners with American Lung Association and Castle Medical Center to Present Asthma Educational Session on May 14

HONOLULU – The Hawaii Department of Health is partnering with the American Lung Association and Castle Medical Center to hold an asthma educational session at Castle Medical Center’s Wellness Auditorium on Thursday, May 14, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The event, which coincides with National Asthma Awareness Month in May, is free and open to parents, teachers, and others. Space is limited. To RSVP, call 263-5400 by May 12.

It is estimated that 127,000 people in Hawaii have asthma, affecting nearly 13 percent of Hawaii’s children and 9 percent of adults. Severe asthma cases result in 7,000 emergency visits and 1,300 hospitalizations each year. In addition to the emotional upheaval that emergency visits and hospitalizations cause Hawaii’s families, it costs providers, insurance companies and consumers nearly \$14 million for the emergency departments and \$30 million for hospitalizations.

“Besides the financial costs, asthma is a lifelong, chronic disease that impacts the quality of our lives and causes us to miss school or work,” said Brittany Ruiz, asthma program coordinator with the Hawaii State Department of Health. “It’s time for Hawaii’s families to take charge, learn all they can about asthma and develop a plan of action with their doctor.”

Asthma is a health condition that affects the lungs that is marked by breathlessness, wheezing, coughing, and chest tightness. Triggers for asthma include strong emotions, cleaning supplies and strong odors, exercise, changes in weather, mold, household pests such as cockroaches, pet dander and dust mites.

The American Lung Association, in collaboration with the Hawaii Department of Health, is launching a new pilot program designed to manage asthma among middle school students in Waianae. The program officially kicks off in May to coincide with Asthma Awareness Month. Other schools or afterschool programs interested in starting Kickin’ Asthma or Open Airways for Schools, another asthma management program available at no cost to schools, may contact the American Lung Association at 687-5378.

###