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Contact: Margaret R. LaCroix
American Lung Association of New England
(860) 838-4369
mlacroix@lungct.org

Contact: Jim O'Connor
QualityMetric Incorporated
(401) 334-8800, ext. 204
joconnor@qualitymetric.com

American Lung Association of New England Launches Online Asthma Control Test

Results To Offer New Insights on How Well Asthma is Controlled in New England

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The American Lung Association of New England (ALANE) has partnered with QualityMetric Incorporated of Lincoln, Rhode Island to offer an online survey and corresponding report that will help asthma sufferers learn how well their condition is being controlled and encourage them to discuss the results with their physician.

The Asthma Control Test™ (ACT™) is a five-question health survey which takes an average respondent about two minutes to complete. Used to measure asthma control in individuals 12 years of age and older, the survey measures the elements of asthma control as defined by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). NHLBI has included ACT in their Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. ACT is a brief, reliable, and valid method of measuring asthma control. The ACT report was designed with input from some of the leading asthma clinicians in the U.S.

“New Englanders have significantly higher asthma rates than the rest of the country. ALANE wants to get a better handle on how well asthma is being controlled and how well people are living with asthma. The Asthma Control Test will give us an accurate snapshot of New England, state by state, and we’ll be able to work with healthcare providers to increase asthma control and decrease triggers,” says Robert Petix, Esq., chair of the Board of Directors of the American Lung Association of New England

“We are delighted to be offering the ACT to the American Lung Association of New England,” says James E. Dewey, PhD, Chief Innovations Research Officer at QualityMetric. “This partnership is part of an overall initiative to put healthcare in the hands of the patient, to empower them to take better control of their health, and in this case, to better manage their asthma. Anyone can now go to www.lungne.org, complete this easy-to-use survey, and get a report that they can use for themselves, their family members, support groups, and doctors.”

ACT and SF-12v2 Health Survey Combined

Specifically for the partnership between ALANE and QualityMetric, the ACT is offered in combination with the SF-12v2® Health Survey. The SF-12v2 is a brief, reliable measure of overall health status. It is the instrument of choice in population health surveys and has also been used extensively as a screening tool. Because of its brevity, it is frequently embedded in longer, disease-specific health surveys. The two surveys, in combination, will provide a comprehensive view of an individual’s functional health and well-being, which can then be used in discussion with a physician.

Data Will Show Status of Asthma Management

Data collected from persons with asthma who take the online ACT and SF-12v2 will provide valuable information on how well asthma is being controlled in New England. As the database grows, ALANE will be able to release information by state and by regions within each of the New England states.

Asthma in New England

A 2006 report produced by the Asthma Regional Council (ARC) offers the following information on the burden of asthma in New England. New Englanders have significantly higher rates of asthma than the rest of the country. Nearly 15% of adults and 14% of children living in New England have asthma, compared to 7.9% for the rest of the country. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data on asthma prevalence shows that the top four states in the country for asthma rates are Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Additionally, asthma affects low-income adults and children, and minorities, at higher rates.

Additional New England asthma facts include:

- Over 30% of adults with asthma reported an activity limitation
- 22% were in fair or poor overall health
- 17% reported frequent mental distress
- Asthma is significantly correlated with employment status: 9% of adults with asthma report being unable to work
- About 21% of adults that are unable to work have asthma

The ARC recommended that more needs to be done to ensure the proper care and control of asthma in New England, with better attention given to the psychosocial aspects of the disease and increased education for patient self-management.

Asthma Rates in Your State

Regionally, New England has higher asthma rates than the rest of the country and Maine leads the nation with a current asthma rate of 10.3% for adults. The current asthma rates for New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island all hover around 10%, while the current rate for Vermont is 9.6% and Connecticut is 9.3%, according to the CDC.

Why Asthma Management is Important

Asthma attacks usually occur in reaction to allergens, certain air pollutants such as secondhand smoke, weather conditions, respiratory illnesses such as cold or flu, and even stress. Proper asthma management is important because asthma that is not well-managed results in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, loss of school and work days, and a reduced quality of life. Well-managed asthma patients are not expected to require crisis interventions or experience life limitations as seen in the ARC report.

Take the Test

Go to www.lungne.org to take the Asthma Control Test (ACT) and discuss the results with your healthcare provider at your next visit.

About the American Lung Association:

The American Lung Association of New England is part of the American Lung Association, the oldest voluntary health organization in the U.S. Originally formed in 1904 to eradicate tuberculosis, today the focus is on all lung disease, including asthma. The mission is to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. For more information, call 1-800-LUNG USA or visit lungne.org.

About QualityMetric:

QualityMetric works with the world's largest healthcare and life sciences companies to measure health outcomes. Our products help market new drugs and biologics, track health improvement or decline, screen populations for disease, and identify future health risks. QualityMetric's patient-reported outcome (PRO) surveys provide scientifically valid assessments of both physical and mental health. Our PROs include the SF-36v2[®], SF-12v2[®], and SF-8[™] Health Surveys, SF-10[™] Health Survey for Children, Asthma Control Test[™] (ACT[™]), Pain Impact Questionnaire[™] (PIQ-6[™]), and DYNHA[®] Dynamic Health Assessments. Our Outcomes Insight Consulting[™] Division can develop customized PROs and provide in-depth analysis of the results. QualityMetric's founder and CEO, John E. Ware, Jr., PhD is a thought-leader in the field of psychometrics and health outcome measurement. Visit us at www.qualitymetric.com.