

# PRESSRELEASE

100 Grand Street • New Britain, CT 06050 • 860-224-5695 • Fax: 224-5779  
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**For Immediate Release** Contact: Kimberly Gensicki, 860-224-5900, x6507

## **HCC staff members attend conference to help stop second-hand smoke exposure**

[New Britain, Conn.] March 31, 2009 -- Two Hospital of Central Connecticut (HCC) staff members recently attended an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) conference aimed at stamping out second-hand smoke and tobacco exposure to children.

HCC pediatrician Ellen Leonard, M.D., and Loreen E. Gawel, MPH, program coordinator for the New Britain Asthma Initiative (NBAI) at HCC, went to the AAP Julius B. Richmond Center Smoke Free Champions CME Training in February at Anaheim, Calif.

Conference attendees learned how to become “smoke-free champions” for children and families. Based on their application, Leonard and Gawel were among 40 people chosen to attend the conference at no cost from a pool of nationwide applicants.

“We learned that most smokers often think about quitting smoking at one point in their lives, but often have attempted and failed,” says Gawel. “By providing these parents of patients or patients themselves counseling in a non-judgmental manner and in small doses, it is usually well-received and effective in helping them reach their goal.”

Attendees were given business cards, for patients and/or parents, with the 1-800-QUIT-NOW phone number, a free service (<http://1800quitnow.cancer.gov/>) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute.

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Second-hand smoke is a trigger for asthma symptoms, which include gasping or shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing. The NBAI is a free program, offered by HCC and the New Britain Health Department, for children with asthma through age 18 who live in Greater New Britain. It helps children and their families learn about the disease and works with the child's physician to help treat and manage it. Current program sponsors are American Savings Foundation; Greater Hartford Jaycees Foundation, Inc.; TD Charitable Foundation; and Swindells Charitable Foundation. For information, please call the New Britain Asthma Initiative at (860) 224-5900 x4229 or visit [www.thocc.org](http://www.thocc.org).

The HCC campus is going smoke-free in November as part of a statewide Connecticut Hospital Association initiative for hospital campuses introduced by Steven Hanks, M.D., senior vice president of Medial Affairs at HCC. The hospital offers Quitting Time Smoking Cessation, which offers four programs to help smokers break the habit. Each is based on successful smoking cessation behavior modification techniques. For more information, please call (860) 224-5433.