



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Hospitals and Partners Begin Initiative to Improve Asthma Care and Access**

WALLINGFORD – On March 3, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) launched a statewide asthma initiative to improve patient care and access and to design new models of care that will transform community partner and hospital relationships. Nearly 100 attendees participated, including hospital leaders, community partners, members of state government, and other experts. The initiative is being led by Anne Diamond, JD, CNMT, CEO, UConn Health's John Dempsey Hospital, and Stuart Marcus, MD, CEO, St. Vincent's Medical Center.

"This is important work on which we're about to embark," said Ms. Diamond. "We have a vision for the future of how asthma is managed in our state, and we are confident as a group that we can move forward the care of asthma for patients in Connecticut."

"Hospitals are always seeking to better serve patients and communities. Coordinating care is key and hospitals can support the continuum," added Dr. Marcus. "Asthma is an issue on which we can make headway and solve."

The asthma initiative was developed by the CHA Committee on Population Health, which determined that asthma remains a problem in Connecticut, affecting the quality of life of children and adults in the state. The kickoff program provided national, statewide, and hospital perspectives, and discussed strategies for addressing the problem collaboratively.

Michelle Cloutier, MD, Professor of Pediatrics & Medicine at UConn Health Center and Director of the Asthma Center at The Children's Center for Community Research at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, provided a national perspective of the asthma problem, saying that race, ethnicity, and poverty are key factors in morbidity. Dr. Cloutier designed the nationally recognized Easy Breathing program.

Mehul Dalal, MD, Chronic Disease Director at the Connecticut Department of Public Health, talked about the state's vision for improving the future for people with asthma as being aligned with Healthy Connecticut 2020. Marie-Christine Bournaki, RN, PhD, Program Director, Connecticut Department of Health, discussed the state's asthma program, describing how asthma has far-reaching effects, from school and work absences, to work and academic performance issues.

Peter Hayward, PhD, Director, Data Analysis, CHA, provided the Connecticut hospital perspective, showing data illustrating asthma as the eighth leading diagnosis for Medicaid hospital utilization in Connecticut. Mary Reich Cooper, MD, JD, Chief Quality Officer and Vice President for Safety and Quality, CHA, described how the initiative will mobilize hospitals in collaboration with community partners to identify barriers and challenges in the continuum for adults and children with asthma; develop population-specific models of intervention; identify, share, and implement best practices; and identify and foster implementation of strategies for sustainability.

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**About CHA**

The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's hospitals since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, community health, health equity, and hospital reimbursement.