

Asthma & Allergy Bulletin

ASTHMA AND ALLERGY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA • NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month



World Asthma Day

May 3

25 million people in the US have asthma

Food Allergy Awareness Week

May 14 - May 20



32 million people in the US have a food allergy, including 1 in 13 children

Speak with your allergist or pulmonologist to find out what you can do to manage your asthma and allergies "for life without limits™!"

Tis the Season - Allergies and Global Warming

Written by David Robertson, MD, MPH

The changing of the seasons in New England has always carried deep meaning. Spring is Maple Syrup season, signaling the end of Winter's cold grip. Summer means fireworks, corn mazes and farm stands. Fall is apple cider donuts and the changing of the leaves. In Winter, the outside world goes dormant, sleeping beneath a blanket of snow, ready to begin the cycle again in the Spring. At least that's what we expect to happen.



Winter 2022-2023 was one of the warmest, driest winters on record, particularly in New England, with very little snowfall or persistent snowpack. This may have been due in part to La Niña, which often results in decreased precipitation on the East coast, but is also part of a larger warming trend. Climate change threatens to impact almost every aspect of our lives, and the world allergy and asthma is no exception.

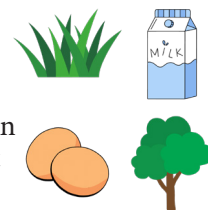
With less snowpack, the ground has thawed earlier, leading to increasing outdoor mold levels, typically the first allergen to emerge each Spring. This has also been followed by early tree pollen emergence, with detectable levels in the last week of March. On average, the "bloom time" of pollen season has increased significantly in length over the past 3 decades. At our latitude, ragweed season increased by over two weeks in length from 1995-2015, and by over 3 weeks in parts of Canada. Warmer temperatures also lead to more overlap between allergen seasons. Typically tree pollen is highest between April-June, while grass pollens are active in June-August – grass pollen season has been starting earlier, leading to higher levels of these pollens when tree pollen is still circulating.

Continued on page 3

A Fresh Look at Eosinophilic Esophagitis in the Spring

Written by Sarita Patil, MD

As allergists, we are uniquely positioned to recognize eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE), though symptoms can range from the classic presentation of dysphagia and food impactions in adulthood to more subtle signs of reflux and slowed food transit. In children, slow eating, early satiety, decreased growth and weight gain are often more common than food impactions. Many of our patients with EoE often reflect that their symptoms went unrecognized for many years in childhood, in part due to an assumption that these were a normal part of growing up. Often, many patients report family members with similar symptoms, resulting in normalization of these symptoms.



While food allergens are often recognized as common triggers of eosinophilic esophagitis, aeroallergens have also been shown to trigger eosinophilic esophagitis as well. Aeroallergen-triggered EoE is particularly difficult to diagnose. Seasonal allergens, including trees, grasses, and weeds often vary in their timing and peak levels from year to year, posing a challenge to identify these allergens. Furthermore, the need for endoscopic evaluation during a period of seasonal allergen exposure adds an additional barrier to care and identification.

Continued on page 2



Asthma and Allergy
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NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

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Meet Our New Executive Director!

To the AAFANE Community:

I am honored and thrilled to have been selected as the new executive director for AAFA New England. This is an incredible opportunity to lead an organization that has been making a difference in the lives of so many people in New England throughout its long history. I want to express my deepest gratitude to the board of directors for entrusting me with this role.

I have been passionate about the mission of AAFA New England for a long time, having immediate family that is affected by asthma. I admire the dedication and hard work of everyone involved in the organization. As executive director, I am committed to building on the success of the past and taking the organization to new heights. I believe that together we can make an even greater impact on our community.

One of my first priorities will be to listen and learn from all of you. I want to understand what has worked well in the past and where we can improve. I want to hear your ideas for how we can better serve our community, and how we can collaborate with other organizations to achieve our shared goals.

I am deeply grateful for the trust that has been placed in me, and I pledge to work tirelessly to advance the mission of AAFA New England. I am committed to transparency, accountability, and collaboration as we work together to make a positive difference in our community.

Thank you again for this incredible opportunity. I am eager to get to work and to lead AAFA New England into a bright future.

Sincerely,
Leslie



A Fresh Look at Eosinophilic Esophagitis in the Spring (continued from page 1)

We find that identifying potential aeroallergens in our patients with EoE and highlighting aeroallergens as a possible disease trigger has proven to be a practical two-pronged approach to effectively identify aeroallergen driven EoE and aid in disease management.

In the past few years, tremendous leaps in management of EoE have been made. While just a few years ago our treatment options were quite limited, we now have several options, ranging from acid suppression, removal of dietary allergens, swallowed steroids, and biologic therapy. Since FDA approval last year, dupilumab therapy has been added as a highly effective therapy, particularly for those with refractory and severe eosinophilic esophagitis. By blocking pro-allergic cytokine pathways driven by IL-4 and IL-13, dupilumab has been particularly useful in patients with multiple atopic conditions in addition to eosinophilic esophagitis. As a result, crafting individual treatment plans based on identification of potential culprit allergens, disease response, and patient preference have become more nuanced and diverse. Caring for our patients, through increased awareness of the myriad of presentations of EoE, identification of allergenic triggers, and management of treatment options has never been more exciting and rewarding. As we together face another spring season, I hope we have another opportunity to partner with our patients and help move to a brighter future.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy start to the spring season!



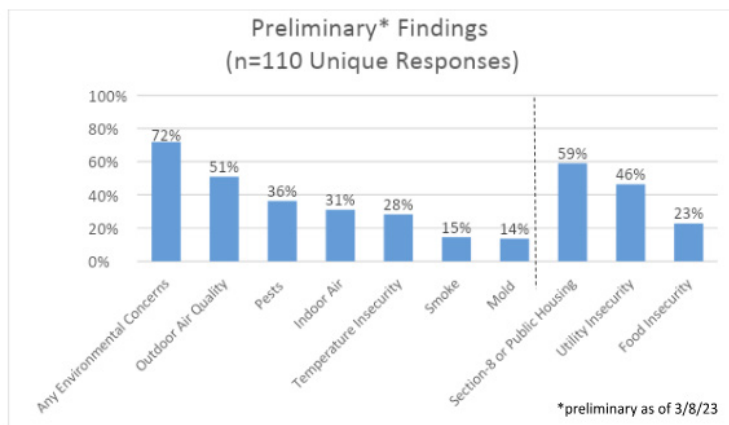
Sarita Patil, MD is an Assistant Professor at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she is a part of the division of Allergy and Immunology in the medicine and pediatric departments. She is the Co-Director of the Adult Multidisciplinary Eosinophilic Esophagitis Clinic at MGH. Her laboratory research focuses on the role of antibodies in allergic diseases.

HHOME Research Grant Project Update

By Shalini Shah, DO



Last summer, AAFA New England awarded its first \$10,000 Medical Research Grant to Drs. Shalini H. Shah, DO and Marissa Hauptman, MD, MPH of the Region 1 New England Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (R1 PEHSU) at Boston Children's Hospital. Their project is entitled "Healthy Homes (HHOMES): Piloting an innovative electronic medical record environmental health screening tool in an urban primary care asthma population." This multidisciplinary collaboration has resulted in the development and implementation of an environmental screening program for childhood asthma patients seen in the Boston Children's Primary Care Asthma Program led by Dr. Faye Holder-Niles, MD, MPH. Families complete an online environmental survey prior to their visit that integrates into the electronic medical record (EMR). The research team notifies the provider within the EMR of identified environmental hazards, and providers then address these concerns within the visit with a combination of educational, physical, and/or community referral resources based on clinical judgment.



Since their launch, over 110 unique patients with childhood asthma have completed the survey (as of March 2023, program ongoing). The program has created educational resources to address each hazard screened for to support providers responding to identified concerns. Funding from the AAFA New England Medical Research Grant has facilitated the purchase and distribution of over \$2,000 worth of physical resources to mitigate environmental hazards – including, but not limited to, dust mite covers, indoor pest management supplies, air filters, and safe cleaning supplies. Preliminary analysis of survey responses shows the majority of respondents (72%) reported at least one environmental concern. Further breakdown of hazards identified is shown in the figure below. This project, along with additional analysis, will be presented in an oral presentation at the annual Pediatric Academic Society Meeting this spring in

Washington, DC. The future goals of this project include language expansion of resources, broadening the screening program to related specialties (pulmonary, allergy, etc.) for a broader asthma population reach, and tracking patient/provider experiences and outcomes for screening tool validation.. Regular medical follow up is important if you have asthma. Speak to your healthcare provider if you have frequent asthma symptoms, feel your your asthma is not under good control, or if you have questions about your asthma treatment.

Tis the Season - Allergies and Global Warning (continued from page 1)

In addition to longer seasons, plants absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂), binding it into sugar. Higher CO₂ levels cause plants to produce not only more pollen, but the pollen contains more of the proteins that cause allergies, which can also trigger asthma.

So what can be done? In the short term, masks and eyewear can help reduce exposure to outdoor allergens, and I certainly see patients who feel better when they wear their masks to mow the lawn. Stock up on the allergy medicines you need now, but please don't hoard them – in 2022, supply chain issues affected medications, and there were times when several common allergy meds were hard to find or just unavailable. At a personal level, allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots), may help provide long term symptom relief for patients with asthma and allergies. As a society, climate change is something that affects us all, and that we will need to work together to solve.



Dr. Robertson, MD/MPH is originally from the New Orleans area, but has called the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts home for almost 20 years, where he lives with his wife and 2 daughters. He is board certified in Pediatrics, adult Internal Medicine and Allergy & Immunology. He is the current President of the New England Society of Allergy, Vice-President of the Massachusetts Society of Allergy, and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the UMass Chan School of Medicine. He will be completing an MBA and opening his own practice in Springfield, MA in July 2023

ASICS Falmouth Road Race 2023

August 20, 2023

Support Team AAFANE



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Two Team AAFANE Runners Share Why They Support AAFA New England

Margaret Fratus



I'm so honored to be running the Falmouth Road Race in support of the New England chapter of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America for a second time! I'm a long time runner and the Falmouth course has always been my favorite race, though never did it bring such meaning to me as it did when I got to run in honor of my sweet and spirited (now) four year old daughter, Nora. My middle child Nora threw us for a loop when at 7 months old she developed life threatening food allergies. I remember being in complete shock when after having peanut butter for the THIRD time, her face broke out in horrible hives. Then a week later, there was a hand print rash of hives on her trunk from my husband picking her up after he had been cooking with eggs. We have no family history of food allergies and they had never been a prior concern of ours until that Summer. Then in the Fall of 2021, we were in and out of the hospital/our pediatrician's office as she struggled to breathe with common colds ultimately leading to an asthma diagnosis. I can't quite put into words how scary it is to watch your child struggling to breathe.

Unfortunately, I know so many other families that have been hit with this reality just the same as us. Some who helped us acclimate to the news and some after her diagnosis, that we were then able to help. The number of children that are living with this condition is growing at an alarming pace. It has been very frightening as a parent but we have been focusing on educating all three of our children on the precautions they need to take in order to stay safe with asthma and allergies! This is why I am continuing to run with AAFA New England. The funds they receive are used for patient centered research; education programs for schools, nurses and families; advocacy to improve state and federal laws and policies (a BIG need with this one); and community outreach. I'm so excited to continue my journey with such an impactful organization.

Katie Sousa

My name is Katie Sousa and I am so excited to be running a second year with Team AAFANE at the 2023 Falmouth Road race. I am honored to be able to support an organization that has been so important to our family for the last decade. At six months old, we realized that our first born, Bianca, would not be sharing sippy cups or snacks with her siblings or friends. Since that time she has developed asthma and experienced several anaphylactic episodes. Helping her to navigate a world that is not always so accommodating to those with life threatening food allergies can be challenging. But, thanks to AAFANE, we have seen incredible progress in the past 12 years while managing her multiple food allergies, and asthma. Additionally, we are so grateful for the vast resources that AAFANE makes available to parents, as well as children. I can still remember the smile on my daughter's face when we attended our first Kyle Dine concert, which was sponsored by AAFANE. These events provide the opportunity for kids to interact with others who have food allergies and provide them with a sense of community belonging. I look forward to partnering with this team again and raising funds to assist this wonderful organization with continuing their amazing work!



GO TEAM AAFANE!

We are so grateful for our Team AAFANE runners: Margaret Fratus, Katie Sousa, Peter Demarco, Laurel Barnett, Kelly Dunham, Caroline Rochford, Hannah Berggren, Gabriella Chiarenza, Meghan Walsh and Nicole Arparian!

PLEASE SUPPORT TEAM AAFANE! To make a donation, go to <http://racerooster.com/events/2023/71069/the-2023-asics-falmouth-road-race/pledge/team/470089>

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 20 to cheer on Team AAFANE in Falmouth!

AAFA New England: News & Notes

Legislative Advocacy

MA S.1338 and H.2183 An Act to improve food allergy awareness. AAFA New England strongly supports these bills! If passed, this will mean the food allergy training video restaurant “persons-in-charge” are required to watch will be updated and made interactive. It will also require that a ‘person-in-charge’ be present whenever the eating establishment is open and serving food.

Here’s how you can help! Contact your senator and representative as soon as possible and ask them to co-sponsor these bills. Your advocacy and support will make a difference! Here’s a link to help you find your senator and representative where you live in Massachusetts: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

Maine LD 1165 Act to Enhance Cost-savings to Consumers of Prescription Drugs On April 6, Leslie Scales provided oral and written testimony voicing AAFA New England’s strong support of this bill. Currently Maine law requires rebates to go to either the consumer at the point of sale, or to the carrier (pharmacy). If passed, this would require the patient/consumer to receive the rebate and all of the savings.

Speaker Series Webinar



Beyond Tuskegee: The Impact of Institutional Trustworthiness and Everyday Racism on Racial Diversity in Research in Asthma and Allergies

Date: May 3
Time 7:00pm-8:00pm



This informative, dynamic and timely topic will be presented by: Margee Louisias, MD, MPH, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Division of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, and Assistant Program Director for Racial Justice and Equity, IM Residency Program, Brigham and Women’s Hospital; Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School

**To Register, please visit
www.asthmaandallergies.org**

**All Speaker Series webinars are recorded and can be found at
asthmaandallergies.org**

AAFANE Donates Respiratory Care Devices!

This February AAFA New England was pleased to donate over 40 respiratory care valved holding chambers (spacers) for use with metered dose inhalers to the Revere MGH Pediatric Practice Group to help treat their patients with asthma when they experienced a shortage of these devices.

Kyle Dine Family Concert and Food Allergy Expo!

Date: Saturday, May 13
Time 11:00am-12:00pm
Where: Missituk Elementary School, 37 Hicks Ave., Medford, MA

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on May 13 for this wonderful FREE family event! No pre-registration is required!



Children’s Book Launch!

The Whole Wilde World is a children’s picture book series written by MG Prezioso. Focused on kids’ health, wellness, and well-being, stories address a range of chronic conditions, including asthma and food allergies, helping to empower kids in their diagnoses, destigmatize various health conditions, and promote inclusivity, safety, and empathy for all children. The first book, **Charlie’s Big Race**, follows Charlie the Cheetah as she is diagnosed with asthma, learns to use her inhaler, and runs in the Grassland Fair and Games. Find Charlie at: wholewildeworld.com as well as on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

MG Prezioso is a PhD candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she focuses on the intersection of literature and psychology.

AAFANE’S Fall Gala 2023 and Exhibit

Fall Gala 2023

Honoring Three Champions of the Asthma & Allergy Community



November 3

Join Us!

Friday, November 3rd

6:00pm – 9:00pm

UMass Club

One Beacon Street, Boston,
32nd Floor

- Lynda Schneider, MD, Section Chief, Allergy and Asthma Program, Boston Children’s Hospital
- Burton’s Grill and Red Heat Tavern Restaurant Group
- The New England School Nurses

We look forward to celebrating with you on Friday, November 3rd for a truly memorable evening as we proudly honor three distinguished Champions of the Asthma & Allergy Community. Enjoy a delicious sit-down dinner, refreshing cocktails, spectacular views from the 32nd floor while you connect with old – and new friends and colleagues! For ticket and sponsor information, please visit our website, www.asthmaandallergies.org or <https://e.givesmart.com/events/snE/>
Seating is limited!

Research: Opportunities to Get Involved



Boston Children's Hospital

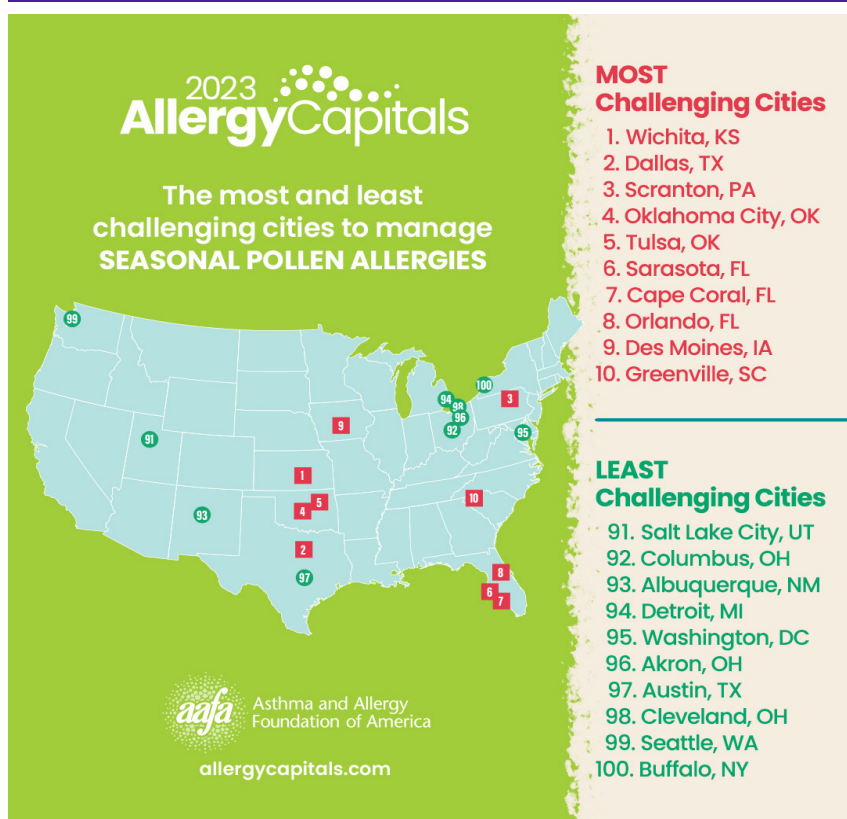
Until every child is wellSM

The Asthma/ Allergy Clinical Research Center Research Center is an National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded Center, currently recruiting for a number of studies for patients with asthma and/or allergies! All visits are compensated and all travel to and from the hospital is covered by the and from the hospital is covered by the research group. The studies also provide free medications. Call or email to see if you or your child is eligible for any of these exciting studies!

- **PARK (Preventing Asthma in high Risk Kids):** Park is a prevention study aimed at identifying whether 2 years of treatment with Xolair[®] (Ant IgE) injections can prevent lasting asthma or reduce asthma severity in asthma or reduce asthma severity in children ages 2-4 years with a history children ages 2-4 years with a history of wheezing, allergies, and family of wheezing, allergies, and family history. We will also evaluate whether this treatment stops or modifies the allergic march, which includes eczema, food allergies and other allergic conditions. <https://parkstudy.org/> <https://answers.childrenshospital.org/asthma-prevention-xolair/>
- **IDEA (Investigating Dupilumab's Effect on Asthma by genotype)** In this research study, we want to learn if the study drug (Dupixent[®] Dupilumab) helps to control your asthma. We are particularly interested in understanding if people who have a certain genetic make-up (genotype) will respond better to this treatment. This study enrolls adolescents and adults age 12 and above. <https://ideaasthma.org/> <https://answers.childrenshospital.org/dupilumab-asthma/>
- **ADRN (Atopic Dermatitis Research Network)** We are investigating mechanisms of atopic dermatitis in any age 2 and above. This study wants to understand how the severity of atopic dermatitis or eczema is influenced by genetic factors.
- **PRECISE:** We are investigating whether novel therapies can help asthma in adolescents and adults. This study enrolls participants age 12 and above. <https://preciseasthma.org/preciseweb/>
- **SARP (Severe Asthma Research Program):** We are investigating mechanisms of severe asthma. This study enrolls participants age 18 and above. <http://www.severeasthma.org/>
- **PANDA (Prevention of Asthma Exacerbations using Dupilumab in Urban Children):** We are investigating mechanisms and benefits of Dupilumab in Urban kids. This study enrolls participants age 6 -17.

Boston Children's Hospital studies provide free treatments, compensation for time and travel. For more information about any of the above BCH studies and/or to refer potential interested families, please email asthma@childrens.harvard.edu or call 857-218-5336 <https://bchasthmaaresearch.com>

2023 Allergy Capitals



May is a peak season for asthma and allergy sufferers.

Research tells us that the rate of allergies is growing. Proper management and treatment can make a huge difference in your quality of life and comfort in your day to day living.

Consider planning a special event or activity at school or work to help raise awareness. By helping others to understand the seriousness of allergies and asthma and the challenges these present, YOU could help make a positive difference in the life of someone who lives with these serious health conditions.

Thank You to Our Corporate Partners

AAFA New England is grateful for the support of our Corporate Partners in 2023. Their generous support allows us to provide valuable resources to help our members live fully with asthma and allergies.



The Thoracic Foundation

Published with a grant from the Thoracic Foundation

Asthma & Allergy Bulletin

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The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter, is dedicated to helping people with asthma and allergic diseases, and those who care for them, through education, support for research and an array of services.

Information contained in this newsletter should not be used as a substitute for responsible professional care to diagnose and treat specific symptoms and illness. Any reference to available products and procedures should not be construed as an endorsement. AAFA New England, including all parties to, or associated with this newsletter, will not be held responsible for any action taken by readers as a result of the newsletter.

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We are Grateful to MSIC for Hosting its Charity Golf Tournament to Benefit AAFA New England!

100% of fees, registrations, sponsorships and contributions will go to MSIC's Charitable Partner, The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter (AAFA New England).

MSIC CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY JULY 10TH 2023
HOPKINTON COUNTRY CLUB

MSIC
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NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

As part of MSIC's Charitable Giving Program, MSIC is proud to support AAFA New England and will match every contribution, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$25,000.

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WHAT IS ASTHMA?
Asthma is a serious, life-threatening, chronic respiratory disease that affects more than 25 million Americans, including an estimated 6 million children. Massachusetts has one of the highest rates of asthma in the nation, affecting one in nine people. One in five people suffer from allergies. AAFA New England offers services to help people learn about management, treatment, and how to prevent emergencies.

...AND ALLERGIES?
An allergy is a chronic condition that affects the immune system — allergies to food, stinging insects and medications can cause life-threatening reactions. The nation has seen a dramatic surge in food allergy in the past decade. Current data indicates that up to 32 million Americans have a food allergy, including 5.6 million children.

WHO IS AAFA NEW ENGLAND?
AAFA New England is the preeminent organization in New England helping individuals, families and schools deal with the challenges of asthma and allergy. Founded in 1979, it is the primary provider of "boots on the ground" education, training, advocacy and support for those managing these conditions.

AAFA New England serves patients of all ages and provides resources for healthcare professionals, caregivers, teachers and childcare providers throughout all 6 New England states. AAFA New England helps its communities through its programs, printed materials, online resources and newsletters.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the control and cure of asthma and allergies. We help people live active, healthy lives, and all programs and services are offered free to the public.

HOW WILL MY PARTICIPATION HELP?
The MSIC charity golf tournament fundraiser will help AAFA New England continue its mission of serving individuals who struggle with these chronic health conditions all across the region.

New research is helping us all understand the best practices required to manage these conditions. Your contribution to AAFA New England will help disseminate this information and deliver important training and life-saving education.

Join us for MSIC's 2023 Charity Golf Tournament on Monday, July 10 at the Hopkinton Country Club, Hopkinton, MA! For information, please contact Erika Morin at: emorin@msic.org



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Notice: Albuterol Shortage

Albuterol is a quick-relief medicine used to treat an asthma flare. Right now there is a shortage of liquid albuterol which is used for nebulizers. Currently, there is NO shortage of the kind of albuterol that is used with metered dose inhalers (MDIs).

You Should Know that an albuterol metered dose inhaler used with a spacer or valved holding chamber should work as well as nebulized albuterol.

Speak with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

Join the AAFANE Community and Get Involved!

- Attend our Speaker Series Programs and learn from the experts!
- Advocate with us for changes in public policy that will benefit the asthma and allergy community!
- Spread Awareness by participating in our social media!
- Support AAFA New England: your donations help us all “for life without limits”!
- Donate to a Team AAFANE Runner! (See Page 4)
- Join us for AAFANE’s Fall Gala 2023 on Friday, November 3! To purchase tickets, go to: <https://e.givesmart.com/events/snE/>

Fall Gala 2023

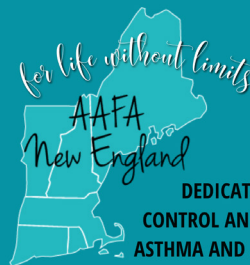


November 3

By joining our community you will receive updates and notifications about research, educational programs and events of interest to you.



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DEDICATED TO THE
CONTROL AND CURE OF
ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES
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