

## Health Promotion and Public Policy Results

This was a busy year. Across the region staff tracked multiple bills in the areas of healthy air, clean renewable energy, tobacco prevention and control, lung disease prevention, lung health promotion and health care access. Additionally, staff provided professional and public education, nurtured community and collaborator relationships and supported research efforts. This publication will give you a sense of what happened in each state and throughout the region. The Lung Association may have taken the lead on these efforts, however, we worked collaboratively with partner coalitions on these priorities. Please contact us for more information.



### Tobacco

**The Challenge:** We need to assure that tobacco-related lung disease is eliminated in future generations.

Given the fact that tobacco smoke is a well-documented cause of death and disability, the most common cause of lung disease and the single most preventable cause of premature death, the American Lung Association of New England supports statewide tobacco prevention and control programs funded at levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

### Connecticut

- The American Lung Association (ALA) sponsored the Partnership for Prevention funded Medicaid Smoking Cessation Summit entitled, “A Breath of Fresh Air: Why Now Is the Time to Help Connecticut’s Residents to Quit Smoking.” It was held on February 17, 2011 and featured Steve Shestakofsky, former Director of State Legislation for the Massachusetts Medical Society and advocate for Tobacco Free Mass. Fifty-four participants attended including lawmakers, health care professionals and providers, advocates, and consumers.
- The ALA partnered with the MATCH Coalition and legislators to introduce five tobacco related bills and introduced three additional bills specific to the ALA mission related to tobacco, air quality and asthma. Staff submitted written and oral testimony, encouraged leadership board members and advocates to contact policymakers and media channels to share our position. During this year’s session the cigarette tax was increased from \$3.00 to \$3.40, the tax on snuff tobacco was raised from .55 cents to \$1 per ounce and there was an increase from 27.5% to 50% tax on all other tobacco products
- The American Lung Association hosted a Menthol Roundtable on April 18, 2011 with Senator Blumenthal, health experts and community leaders. This session addressed the current FDA concerns about banning menthol as a cigarette flavoring.
- A Not on Tobacco (NOT) facilitator training was held at the CT office on April 29, 2011 with 18 people in attendance. (The Not-On-Tobacco program is an evidence based tobacco treatment program for teens offered in a classroom or community setting.)

### Maine

- ALAME staff provided testimony and supported a number of tobacco legislative issues including:
  - protecting the Fund for a Healthy Maine (Maine’s Tobacco Settlement Funding)
  - supporting access to tobacco treatment for MaineCare recipients
  - increasing the tobacco excise tax
  - increasing the excise tax on all other tobacco products



## Tobacco

### Maine ~ *Continued*

- The ALA provided the Alternative to Suspension (ATS) program to all 160 high schools in Maine. The program, along with a N-O-T brochure encourages principals to rethink how they address tobacco use at their schools and to consider the ATS program in lieu of out of the traditional school suspension when students are caught with tobacco on school property.
- Staff conducted the sixth Annual Tobacco Treatment Specialists' workshop on November 13th in Augusta. Twenty of the thirty certified specialists attended with several serving as faculty.
- In partnership with the Center for Tobacco Independence, the annual Partnership for a Tobacco Free Maine Intensive Tobacco Treatment Training and conference was held May 9-12<sup>th</sup> in Portland. More than 80 people attended.
- The ALA held the Maine Medicaid Tobacco Treatment Summit and attained second year funding for the project from the Partnership for Prevention in Washington DC.

### Massachusetts

- Alongside partners of the Tobacco Free Mass coalition, ALA secured Governor Deval Patrick's support to defend Massachusetts' 2004 Smokefree Workplace Law. The Governor vetoed efforts to limit the local authority of our 3 largest cities (Boston, Worcester, and Springfield) from regulating cigar bars in their communities.
- ALA continues to lead the statewide effort to eliminate the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies and all health care facilities. As of July, 14 Massachusetts cities and towns have banned the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies. These ordinances cover almost 20% of the state population. Legislation to enact this policy statewide is still pending.

### New Hampshire

- The ALA unsuccessfully fought the legislative effort to reduce the cigarette excise tax by ten cents. ALA and our public health collaborators will continue to monitor the impact of this misguided policy decision and document its impact. During the debate, the ALA along with our partners sponsored a study to look at the economic impact of this rollback.

### Rhode Island

- ALA continued its partnership with the RI Department of Health through a grant to manage, grow and support the RI Tobacco Control Network.
- ALA coordinated the RI Tobacco Cessation Summit held on March 1<sup>st</sup> with the RI Tobacco Control Network and other planning committee members with grant money from a regional grant to the ALANE from the Partnership for Prevention. More than 100 people attended. The keynote speaker was Howard Koh, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- ALA, in partnership with the RI Tobacco Control Network, successfully fought off an attempt to reduce the state cigarette tax by \$1.
- ALA assisted in efforts to expand smokefree policies in public housing in West Warwick and Woonsocket and to raise the local tobacco retail license fee in Cranston from \$25 to \$100 per year.
- A Freedom From Smoking facilitator training was held in February in Providence attracting participants from RI, CT, MA and NJ.



## Tobacco ~ *Continued*

### Vermont

- During the 2011 school year, ALA trained facilitators completed 28 N-O-T groups, the ALA teen smoking cessation program. Programs were conducted in schools, treatment centers and residential homes.
- ALA held a joint press conference to announce the cigarette excise tax campaign at the Vermont Statehouse with partners in the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont. One of the speakers was Better Breathers Club member and Lung Association volunteer.
- In coordination with Vermont Department of Health, ALA created an interactive workshop, “Helping Vermont Teens Quit Smoking: What’s Working” and presented it at the annual Student Assistance Professional (SAP) conference.

## Healthy Air and Energy

**The Challenge:** We must assure that the air we breathe does not cause or worsen lung disease. Current air quality laws must be strengthened to further protect public health and our energy policies should move us toward healthy, renewable energy sources.

Indoor air quality should also be healthy and not compromised to conserve energy.

### Connecticut

- A State of the Air press event was held at the CT legislative office building on April 27, 2011 with Senator Gerratana, Senator Gomes, and ALA in CT leadership board members speaking. There were approximately 15 people in attendance. The event attracted some media coverage.

### Maine

- ALA staff provided testimony and supported a number of healthy air legislative proposals including: assuring Maine nuisance laws protect lung health; increasing tenant awareness of smokefree rental properties; increasing the use of commuter buses
- Due to the pivotal positions of Maine’s US Senators, ALA in ME was one of 5 states to receive a \$75,000 grant from the ALA national office to protect and defend the Clean Air Act. This funding is being used to organize Maine’s medical and health communities around this important issue.
- ALA in ME was one of 5 states selected by the ALA national office to participate in a pilot, volunteer led and organized advocacy network. The Fighting for Air Network will focus on protecting and defending the Clean Air Act.
- ALA continues to serve as vice chair of the advisory board of the Maine Energy Education (MEEP) program. The MEEP staff had a very successful year providing classroom presentations from primary grades to high school. The education is experiential energy education and over 40,000 students have participated in the past 4 years alone.



## Healthy Air and Energy

### Massachusetts

- The Western MA Woodstove Change-Out Project, managed by the ALA, has been an enormous success. Over \$270,000 worth of vouchers have been given to residents who replace their old woodstove with a new EPA certified wood, pellet or gas stove. As a result of this project ALA has helped reduce local air pollution, developed a partnership with the Berkshire Area Health Education Center, and furthered our relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency.
- ALA in MA has launched the Massachusetts Healthy Air Campaign to mobilize health organizations and individuals to protect and defend the Clean Air Act and the authority of the EPA. We are using earned media, visibility events, direct advocacy and coalition building. Ten public health and medical organizations have signed on to work with us on this campaign.
- ALA successfully advocated that the Springfield City Council revoke the zoning permit that was originally granted for a proposed biomass-fueled commercial power plant. This incinerator would have been built in a city that has a disproportionately high burden of asthma, where one in four youth live with the disease and where air quality is already poor.

### New Hampshire

- The NH Mold Task Force was organized by the ALA in New Hampshire's Leadership Board and held its first meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup>. The goal of this group is to assure that property owners receive best practice service when they seek professional help in identifying and addressing mold problems in their residences, schools or other workplaces.

### Rhode Island

- As an active member of the Coalition for Transportation Choices, ALARI worked on bills to get sustainable funding for transportation in the state. Final budget included some of CTCs proposals, though it failed to include support for the RI Public Transit Authority.

### Vermont

- ALAVT held a press conference at the statehouse on April 27 to share the annual State of the Air Report results and acknowledge the work of the state to reduce diesel emissions by retrofitting and replacing old school buses and businesses that adopt idling reduction policy through Vermont Idle-Free Fleets.
- ALAVT participated in a press conference hosted by Senator Bernie Sanders to oppose proposed to Environmental Protection Agency in the FY11 provisional federal budget.
- ALAVT kicked off Vermont Idle-Free Fleets, a program to encourage businesses and towns to adopt diesel idling reduction policy, thanks to a \$35,976 grant from the Vermont Department of Conservation.
- ALAVT staff wrote or gave testimony, recruited healthcare professionals to give testimony, provided information to lawmakers upon request to advocate for:

- 1) Increasing the cigarette tax by at least \$1.00 per pack (result: \$.38 effective July 1, 2011).
- 2) Securing level funding for state's comprehensive tobacco control program (result: proposed \$1.9 million cut was reduced to \$1 million cut).
- 3) Eliminating a legislative mandate for inclusion of biomass electricity generating plants in the state's energy portfolio (result: provision was eliminated).



## Lung Health Promotion & Lung Disease Prevention

**The Challenge:** We must assure that the current burden of lung diseases is reduced for people with lung disease and their families and lung disease is eliminated in future generations.

### Connecticut

- ALACT had a successful completion of the COPD Symposium on World COPD Day (November 17th) at the University of Hartford in West Hartford. The symposium sold out with 50 people in attendance.
- ALA held an Open Airways for Schools (OAS) Training on March 2, 2011 where 20 school nurses from throughout Connecticut were trained to be OAS facilitators.
- A successful Asthma Educators Institute was held on April 14 and 15, 2011 at the Mystic Hilton in Mystic, CT. Approximately 35 health care professional attended.
- ALACT had a successful completion of the Asthma Educator Institute at the Tully Health Center in Stamford, Connecticut on August 31st and September 1, 2010 with 17 individuals in attendance.
- The Annual Influenza Conference was held at the Woodwinds in Branford, Connecticut on Wednesday, September 15, 2010 with over 200 public health and health care professionals in attendance-- great speakers from CDC, New York Health Dept, Rhode Island Health Dept, Protein Sciences, and many more

### Maine

- As a member of the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development, ALA worked with the Governor's Office on Health Policy and Finance to assemble a transition document on the Affordable Care Act for the new administration.
- 59 health professionals attended the ALA's 4th annual COPD Educators Institute held at Southern Maine Medical Center. There are more than 150 health professionals trained to support people living with COPD
- On May 5-6<sup>th</sup> the American Lung Association sponsored the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Asthma Educator Institute. Twelve healthcare professionals and 26 senior respiratory therapy students attended. This event is held in partnership with Southern Maine Community College and Kennebec Valley Community College.
- The ALAME received two proposals for funding from the Asthma and Lung Disease Research Fund. One will examine the causes for asthma hospital admissions and the other will provide analysis of tobacco and asthma related questions on Maine's first Tribal Health Assessment being conducted by all of the 5 tribes in Maine.

### Massachusetts

- ALA served in a leadership role on the Steering Committee for the first Massachusetts COPD Summit held in November. A statewide coalition and a COPD action plan are the result of this effort.
- The ALANE's Medical and Scientific Branch organized the Worcester Pulmonary Symposium held on March 9th. 131 physicians, respiratory therapists and pulmonary nurses attended along with 11 vendors. Presentations included Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome Care in the ICU and Non-Invasive Ventilation and Lung Donation/Transplant.



## Lung Health Promotion & Lung Disease Prevention

### Massachusetts ~ *Continued*

- ALAMA continued to play a key role in the Massachusetts Asthma Action Partnership and the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition. Staff coordinated the implementation of asthma education programs and creation of an asthma resource center within the Springfield Public Schools.
- The Massachusetts Thoracic Section of the ALANE's Medical and Scientific Branch's 2011 Annual Meeting was held in April. 239 health care professionals attended this event. A comprehensive set of event recommendations has been produced to improve the event in the future.
- ALA staff worked with Genesis Healthcare in Coventry and New England Sinai Hospital in Stoughton, MA to establish new Better Breather Clubs. NE Sinai is becoming a well established club with 4 monthly meetings already held, with an average of 15 attendees each month.

### New Hampshire

- On June 22-23, twenty-one health care professionals from NH, ME, VT, MA, CT and Pennsylvania attended the ALA Asthma Educator Institute held at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, NH.
- ALA has been selected to facilitate monthly meeting of the NH Asthma Health Improvement-Asthma Educator Network. ALANH anticipates continuing in this role as the facilitator of this growing group of asthma professionals.
- On June 24th, 20 asthma educators attended the ALA National Asthma Educator Exam Preparation Workshop. This day-long review workshop was designed for health care professionals who work as asthma educators, have completed the two-day ALA Asthma Educator Institute and are committed to pursuing national certification as an asthma educator (AE-C).

### Rhode Island

- ALA continued to be a leader in the RI Asthma Control Coalition with both staff and Leadership Board involvement.
- ALA staff presented "Counting on You" a childcare provider education program to the staff and aides of the Cranston and TriTown Head Starts.
- ALA is an active member of the RI Vaccine Disparities work group focused on increasing vaccination rates in racial and ethnic minority communities.

### Vermont

- ALAVT has received \$14,880 in grants and donations to help provide up to 40 full scholarships for 8-12 year old children with moderate to severe asthma to attend Champ Camp for Kids with Asthma in August.

**We're saving lives by  
improving lung health  
and  
preventing lung disease  
and we do that through  
education, research and  
advocacy.**





## Regional Efforts

- All six NE states had efforts around the American Lung Association key report releases:
  - State of Tobacco Control
  - State of the Air
  - The Economic Benefit of Smoking Cessation
  - Medicaid Tobacco Treatment Status Report and
  - Missed Opportunities- Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccination in Older Adults.
- ALANE has received a continuation grant of \$15,000 from the Partnership for Prevention to continue regionwide efforts to assure best-practice tobacco treatment is available to those who receive Medicaid.
- As a leader in the country, ALANE staff attended the ALA National capacity building workshop for Better Breather Clubs (BBC). Staff worked on ways to increase the number of facilitators/clubs using an online training program.
- ALANE attended the Asthma Educators Institute (AEI) Capacity Building Workshop in partnership with the BBCs workshop. Because of ALANE's long history and success in organizing AEIs, ALANE was invited to present our framework and history at the opening session.
- ALA worked with Kindred Healthcare and Durable Medical Homecare companies to increase the number of Better Breather Clubs in New England. To date 5 new clubs have been established.
- Three Freedom From Smoking facilitator trainings were held throughout Southern New England to expand our foundation of volunteers for a total of 55 newly trained facilitators to run our smoking cessation group program in their communities and workplaces.
- Not-On-Tobacco facilitator training held in Western CT. Participants included 3 CT school districts and 2 community health organizations and 1 community police officer from RI.
- On June 14<sup>th</sup> ALANE cosponsored and participated in a regional workshop on the health impacts of biomass burning. The event was organized by the University of Massachusetts at Lowell with other cosponsors such as the New England College of Occupational and Environmental Physicians, MA Medical Society and North East States Coordinated Air Use Management agency.

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