

National Jewish Health Receives Grant to Improve Care of Asthma Patients in the San Luis Valley

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DENVER — National Jewish Health has received a grant for \$950,308 from GlaxoSmithKline to improve care of asthma patients in Colorado's San Luis Valley with educational materials for patients and hands-on training for primary health care teams. Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children and adults, and is the greatest cause of missed school days. The San Luis Valley has one of the highest asthma rates in the state.

The two-year Independent Medical Educational Program Grant will allow National Jewish Health to provide primary health care teams in Colorado's San Luis Valley with hands-on training to help physicians and healthcare teams better diagnose and manage asthma.

"This is a great opportunity for our providers and nursing staff to help patients and families learn about asthma and develop the skills that will help them control their disease," said Denise Trujillo, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing at Valley Wide Health Systems. "With well-controlled asthma they are much more likely to stay active and healthy."

Children in the San Luis Valley are among the hardest hit by asthma. In the San Luis Valley, Alamosa and Rio Grande counties have some of the highest rates of hospitalizations for pediatric asthma. Reports show that 14-percent of school-aged children in the San Luis Valley have been diagnosed with asthma by a health care provider, compared to a national average of 9.5 percent.

In response to this need, Conejos County Hospital, the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center and Valley-Wide Health Systems Inc have partnered with National Jewish Health to develop a program known as "*Quality Asthma Care in the San Luis Valley*."

The National Jewish Health program seeks to provide sustainable improvements in asthma care to two hospitals and a network of provider clinics in the rural San Luis Valley, all of which provide care to a population at risk for significant disparities in health and high asthma burden. The population is a rural community with high rates of poverty, and is a federally designated health professional shortage area, as well as a medically underserved area.

"The San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center and Physician Services is delighted to have this opportunity to collaborate with National Jewish Health and providers in the San Luis Valley to provide this level of expertise and care to members of our community," said Helen Lester, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center. "It is working together as a team that provides the best of care and outcomes."

The educational grant provides funding for the primary health care teams throughout the San Luis Valley to receive hands-on training related to asthma as well as tools for their clinics to help care for children and adults with asthma and other breathing problems. In addition to training for health care providers, asthma education materials are being developed in English and Spanish to help individuals and families manage their asthma successfully. Asthma QuickFacts are an example of these materials, and are being used with patients in clinics at Conejos County Hospital, the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center and Valley-Wide Health Systems Inc. Each participating clinic has "Asthma Champions" that were provided additional training and work with staff at National Jewish Health to provide the best asthma care. The program kicked-off in the spring of 2011, and the training and development phases of the program will be completed by December 2012.

The goal of this program is to build and provide sustainable infrastructure, education and skill development that supports health care teams to provide quality asthma care that includes assessing, treating and managing asthma as directed by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's evidence-based asthma guidelines. The success of the educational program will be determined by evaluating the participating clinics' practices for key quality asthma care activities, such as coaching patients to use proper inhaler technique. The Rocky Mountain Prevention Research

Center in Alamosa, which is part of the University of Colorado, is working with the Quality Asthma Care Program for the San Luis Valley team to gather and analyze the data to determine the success of the program. NJH has partnered with a Denver-based educational outcomes provider, Healthcare Research, Inc., to provide an educational outcomes report for this initiative.

[National Jewish Health](#) is known worldwide for treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders, and for groundbreaking medical research. Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to these disorders. Since 1998, *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked National Jewish the #1 respiratory hospital in the nation. National Jewish Health is accredited by the Accreditation Council of Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Valley Wide Health Systems, is a non-profit community/migrant health center, governed by a volunteer community board. It has thirteen primary health care delivery sites strategically located throughout southern Colorado. These full-service clinics are joined by five dental clinics and a milieu of ancillary health services to address the needs of our patient population. Valley-Wide Health Systems is committed to providing quality, comprehensive health care services with special consideration for medically underserved populations. Fueled by a passion to provide safe and effective health care for all people, Valley-Wide has become a national leader in the health care field and a model for comprehensive, community-based health care. **San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center** is a 49-bed facility who added a Physician Services division, in 2003, bringing primary and specialty care providers under the umbrella of services at SLVRMC. The hospital currently operates a level IV trauma center. The Alamosa County Ambulance Service, stationed at SLVRMC and is staffed with a predominantly Paramedic level ambulance crew. SLVRMC, and other Valley health care facilities have the advantage of a locally stationed fixed wing air flight service to expedite patient transfer to higher trauma level care as needed. SLVRMC is committed to be a fully integrated healthcare facility who is physician led and professionally managed. SLVRMC is an affiliate of Centura Health.

Conejos County Hospital is a critical access hospital providing healthcare access to the most southern San Luis Valley and northern New Mexico. CCH has a full service ER providing emergent care to the area. A 17 bed facility, CCH prides themselves in providing quality care with a personal touch. CCH has two clinic locations in Conejos County staffed with primary care providers and strong relationships for upstream specialty care. CCH is an affiliate of Centura Health.

[Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Network](#), established in 1998, is one of 37 Prevention Research Centers in the United States funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The mission of all PRCs is to "work as an interdependent network of community, academic, and public health partners to conduct prevention research and promote the wide use of practices proven to promote good health.

[Healthcare Research, Inc.](#), provides quantitative and qualitative marketing research and consulting services to the health care industry, including outcomes assessments, patient satisfaction, social marketing, advertising effectiveness and strategic positioning. Expertise focuses on health care delivery systems.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 120 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

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