



Children's Health Fund



Columbia University
MAILMAN SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**NEW STUDY BY CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND & COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH FINDS
'BEST PRACTICE' ASTHMA PROGRAM SAVES
THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
MORE THAN \$4500 A YEAR PER CHILD**

**COULD MEAN ENORMOUS SAVINGS IN HEALTH CARE COSTS FOR THE
NINE MILLION U.S. CHILDREN LIVING WITH ASTHMA**

Published in Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved

New York, NY – May 17, 2010 – Children's Health Fund (CHF) and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health report in a newly published study, **a savings of more than \$4500 per child with asthma – or \$11 saved for every one dollar spent** – to the healthcare system with the use of a best-practice asthma intervention program in primary care for inner-city medically underserved children.

The findings are published in a special supplement published in May of the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*.

The study found that treatment according to best-practice guidelines **significantly reduces** hospitalization and emergency room visits for asthma. In addition, **severity of asthma symptoms was reduced**, including night-time symptoms that disrupt a child's sleep and may interfere with school performance and also hospitalization and emergency room visits. Use of 'best-practices' treatment protocols is a component of the "medical home" model – comprehensive, consistent, coordinated care – and that is why it is so important that children with asthma have access to a medical home.

"In the wake of the passage of healthcare reform and a time of serious national economic duress, this study reinforces that providing comprehensive, high quality health care in the 'medical home' model is also the most economically sound in the long-term," said **Irwin Redlener, MD, president of the Children's Health Fund & clinical professor of population and family health and pediatrics at Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health**. "In fact, there are over nine million children living with asthma in the United States including more than two million who are living in poverty. These children are at particularly high risk for hospitalization and emergency room visits that could be prevented with access to quality asthma care, potentially resulting in enormous savings to the health system."

The total annual cost of the implementation at CHF's New York program was **\$390,169 or \$420 per asthma patient**. The total *annual* savings attributable to clinical outcomes for this patient population was **\$4,202,813 or \$4,525 per patient with asthma**. Conservatively estimated savings exceeded cost of intervention by nearly **11 to 1**. In this population the costs and therefore the savings were primarily realized by lower Medicaid expenditures.

Dr. Redlener continues, "If we ensure access to healthcare and 'best practice' asthma treatment for children, especially those at high risk, there is the potential to save the healthcare system billions of dollars."

CHF studied **202 high-risk inner city children** who are primary care patients of Children's Health Fund's New York program and found that, as a result of the primary care best-practice intervention, emergency room visits and hospital stays significantly declined, resulting in substantial savings to health care system.

Children's Health Fund's Childhood Asthma Initiative was launched in New York City in **1997** and is currently implemented in CHF's New York City and Washington, D.C. programs. It was established to increase access to health care and improve management of chronic asthma for thousands of medically underserved children and families. The program brings clinical care that is consistent with the most recent **National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) 'Best Practice' Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma** to children in poor communities where access to medical care is limited.

About Children's Health Fund

Founded in 1987 by singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, Dr. Redlener is also Clinical Professor at Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health. Children's Health Fund (CHF) is the nation's leading pediatric provider of mobile-based health care for homeless and low-income children and their families. CHF's mission is to bring health care directly to those in need through the development and support of innovative medical programs, response to public health crises, and the promotion of guaranteed access to health care for all children. CHF currently has 50 mobile medical clinics serving 100's of locations across the country. Over the past 23 years, the organization has supported more than two million health care visits for disadvantaged children, often in places where doctors and health care providers are in short supply. For more information about CHF, visit www.childrenshealthfund.org.

About the Mailman School of Public Health

The only accredited school of public health in New York City and among the first in the nation, Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health pursues an agenda of research, education, and service to address the critical and complex public health issues affecting millions of people locally and globally. The Mailman School is the recipient of some of the largest government and private grants in Columbia University's history. Its more than 1000 graduate students pursue master's and doctoral degrees, and the School's 300 multi-disciplinary faculty members work in more than 100 countries around the world, addressing such issues as infectious and chronic diseases, health promotion and disease prevention, environmental health, maternal and child health, health over the life course, health policy, and public health preparedness. www.mailman.columbia.edu