



Tarrant County: Our North Texas Home

Asthma 411 Shows Outstanding Results New School-Based Program Helps Kids Breathe Easier



*Tarrant County Judge
B. Glen Whitley*

outstanding results.

In the first year of Asthma 411, the health of our students is improving, fewer kids are missing school and there are fewer visits to the emergency room.

Asthma 411 is a collaboration. The UNT Health Science Center, the Cook Children's Medical Center, the JPS Health Network, the County Judge's office and our school districts are all working together.

It's the way we do things in Tarrant County. We address our problems as a community and find solutions together.

Asthma 411 enables immediate care for kids in respiratory distress at school and makes students, parents and school nurses breathe easier. It makes it possible for students to return to class, reduces emergency room visits and absenteeism, and helps to identify undiagnosed students who need treatment.

Cook Children's covers the cost of equipment, medication and the training of school nurses. The schools get albuterol, a medication to increase air flow in the lungs and a nebulizer to deliver it. JPS helps school districts connect with physicians to write standing orders for asthma treatment.

Asthma 411 is modeled after a similar program developed in St. Louis by asthma expert Dr. David Sterling, a UNT Health Science Center public health professor. He is collecting data to see how we can improve the program.

This year, about half of the county's 20 school districts adopted the Asthma 411 program, covering over 200,000 children.

It's worth noting the success of the Hurst-Euless-Bedford school district, which fully embraced Asthma 411 and dispensed 190 doses of asthma medication in the first two months of the school year.

"I was floored," said Pam Hernalsteen, in charge of nursing

services in the HEB district. "Never did I realize that there were so many children who didn't have asthma medication at school."

Earlier this year, two brothers, a third-grader and a sixth-grader in the HEB district, were heading home after school when the younger one

had an asthma attack. The older boy took his brother back to school, where he knew adults could help. A crossing guard contacted the principal who called the school nurse. She met the boys in the schoolyard with medication.

That's the difference Asthma 411 can make.

Sterling, the UNT Health Sciences epidemiologist, says asthma is under-reported and under-diagnosed.

The beginning and the end of the school year, when the weather is hot and breathing can be aggravated by air pollution, is when students are most at risk for asthma.

There are some simple, common sense activities to help control asthma, like not idling vehicles in front of schools. Second-hand cigarette smoke and even air fresheners can be irritants. It's important to clean air conditioning filters, keep humidity low and watch for mold and mildew.

The bottom line is that asthma compromises success at school and puts children at risk of hospitalization.

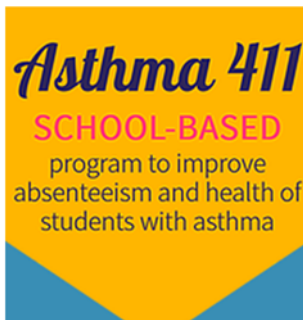
Three Tarrant County school districts with previously established asthma programs, were able to get equipment to test student oxygen levels through the Asthma 411 program.

By this time next year, we hope to see every Tarrant County school district participate in Asthma 411.

I am proud to say that in Tarrant County we know how to work together. As your County Judge, I do my part to lead these collaborative efforts. Join me in building a stronger, safer and healthier community.



A school nurse treats for asthma



50 Years of Service to Tarrant County's Older Adults

Sixty & Better: A Community Champion for Older Adults

Senior Citizen Services of Tarrant County Changes its Name but Holds Fast to its Mission

Older adults in Tarrant County have a champion on their side: Sixty & Better.

Sixty & Better, formerly Senior Citizens Services of Tarrant County, may have changed its name this year, but the mission remains the same.

"We work to empower older adults to live with purpose, independence and dignity," said Jerry Mosman, executive director of the organization that serves thousands of Tarrant County's older adults each year.

"Where Healthy Aging Begins," is Sixty & Better's motto, Mosman said.

Over its 50-year history, Sixty & Better developed programs that focus on nutrition, socialization, fall prevention, assistance with benefits, transportation and other services.

It offers some or all of those programs, as well as volunteer opportunities and wellness workshops, at 25 activity centers for older adults across the county.



The first senior activity center in the county was started in 1967 by the National Council of Jewish Women on Hemphill Street, south of downtown Fort Worth.

Founders Rosalyn G. Rosenthal and Evelyn Siegel were honored this year at a Sixty & Better golden anniversary celebration for their vision, dedication, and commitment to older adults living and thriving in Tarrant County.

Fellowship Corner, near New York and Allen avenues,

opened the following year.

Then, in 1971, the agency linked with United Way of Tarrant County and two years later began serving lunches under a federal meals program. Sixty & Better was off and running.

"By taking care of grandparents, we keep them healthy and out of the hospital," Mosman said. "We help the entire family if they know that grandma is going to get a meal, socialize at an activity center or visit a museum."

Older adults need to plan their own activities because they have varied interests, he said.

It's important to remember that there is no such thing as a typical older person. Someone at 65 may have different needs and opportunities than someone who is 85. Solutions to the issues older adults face have to be need-based, because one size does not fit all.

"Everybody wants to take care of themselves, but may not know how to do it," Mosman said. "If you don't have that connection to an agency like Sixty & Better, then it is all on your own shoulders to figure it out." Life really becomes challenging for older adults when the car keys are taken away, he said.

Van service is available at 17 of the activity centers to pick someone up if they live within two miles and take them to the center or a nearby community event.

The future for Sixty & Better is locked into the tremendous growth of the elderly population, Mosman said, with 10,000 people turning 65 every day.

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of people over 65 increased by 33 percent in Tarrant County. Between 2015 and 2025 the number of older adults is expected to increase by 44 percent.

People live longer and life expectancy increases every year. "It's not a problem, it's a blessing to our community because they bring wisdom and provide an army of volunteers," he said. Older adults in our community give rides to other seniors, fix plumbing problems and make hospital visits.

"They help each other out," Mosman said. "We must watch out for each other and take care of each other."

Sixty & Better is proud to partner with local governments, service providers and other organizations to maximize its impact across the community, he said.

"Our goal is to end isolation, so those in the prime of life can stay connected, healthy, active and contribute to our community," Mosman said. "More than ever before, Sixty & Better is ready and able to be the one-stop source where healthy aging begins for all of Tarrant County."



Sixty & Better Community Programs

Meal Program: Nutritious meals served in a home-away-from-home environment at the activity centers

Activity Centers: Network of neighborhood centers for older adults that offer services, workshops and programs

Health for Me: A chronic disease self-management program to improve health through personal planning and wise choices

Nutrition: Classes in healthy eating and developing menus

Matter of Balance: A two-month fall-prevention class

Exercise: Activity center-based physical fitness and wellness programs that include Tai Chi and Yoga

Transit for Seniors: Rides to centers and community events

Benefits Enrollment: Navigating and connecting older adults to benefits and social service programs

Aging Mastery Program: A class in taking charge of the aging process and how to make the best use of your extra years

Senior Source: A partnership with Tarrant Area Food Bank that provides free food to older adults

Volunteers: Assist at activity centers or in the community

For Information on Programs or Volunteering

(817) 413-4949 — www.sixtyandbetter.org

Sixty & Better offices are at The Resource Connection
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