

November 2007

Dear Clinician:

Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and representatives from the following 21 Massachusetts health care organizations have joined together to endorse a key component of best practices in the management of adult asthma: the use of written asthma management plans.

Research has shown that asthma programs using written asthma action plans have resulted in significant reductions in patient morbidity and service utilization such as emergency department visits and hospitalization. In addition to helping improve patient outcomes, written asthma management plans can enhance communication between you and your patients.

The National Asthma Education and Prevention Program Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma, 2007, states the following recommendation: "Provide all patients with a written asthma action plan that includes two aspects: (1) daily management and (2) how to recognize and handle worsening asthma. Written action plans are particularly recommended for patients who have moderate or severe persistent asthma, a history of severe exacerbations, or poorly controlled asthma."

Enclosed please find samples of the Massachusetts Adult Asthma Action Plan and the Massachusetts Adult Asthma Care Card, along with an order form. The multicolored, duplicate form and care card are available to you in 8 different languages, free of charge in multiple quantities. Fax or mail the enclosed order form to the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse (see form for contact information) or order online at www.maclearinghouse.com.

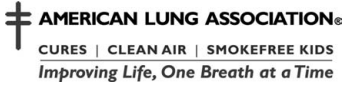
Also enclosed please find a fact sheet on **Work-Related Asthma (WRA)** from the Occupational Health Surveillance Program at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health along with their **Confidential Report of Occupational Disease and Injury Form** that physicians can use to report work-related asthma diagnosis in their practice. The American Thoracic Society reports that one out of seven adults (15%) with asthma has work-related asthma. The diagnosis of work-related asthma (WRA) is made by confirming the diagnosis of asthma and by establishing a relationship between asthma and work.

The use of written asthma management plans has been strongly endorsed by the organizations listed. We hope that you find the MAAAP forms, care cards, and related materials helpful in caring for your adult asthma patients. If you have any comments or questions about the form, please contact MHQP at 617-402-5020 or at info@mhqp.org.



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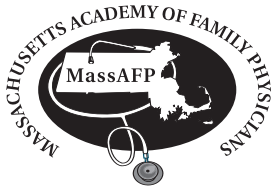


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MEDICAL SOCIETY
Every physician matters, each patient counts.

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MASSPRO

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NETWORK HEALTH

Neighborhood Health Plan
Getting better together.

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These guidelines are endorsed by the members of the Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and other organizations. They are endorsed as quality practice recommendations and are not intended as a description of benefits. Each health plan or payor makes its own determination on coverage and benefits.

About MHQP

Health care information you can trust:

MHQP provides reliable information to help physicians improve the quality of care they provide their patients and help consumers take an active role in making informed decisions about their health care.

Who we are:

Massachusetts Health Quality Partners is a broad-based coalition of physicians, hospitals, health plans, purchasers, consumers, and government agencies working together to promote improvement in the quality of health care services in Massachusetts. MHQP was first established in 1995 by a group of Massachusetts health care leaders who identified the importance of valid, comparable measures to drive improvement.

Member Organizations:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Fallon Community Health Plan, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Health New England, Neighborhood Health Plan, Tufts Health Plan, Massachusetts Hospital Association, Massachusetts Medical Society, Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, MHQP Physician Council, two consumer representatives, and one employer representative.

Our Mission:

MHQP's mission is to improve the quality of health care services delivered to the residents of Massachusetts through broad based collaboration among health care stakeholders.

Our Vision:

MHQP's vision is to be the premier health care quality collaborative in Massachusetts, including the most trusted and influential source for comparative health care quality performance information.

Our Values:

- > We believe in the power of collaboration.
- > We believe our work should have a measurable impact and be evidence-based.
- > We believe that eliminating unnecessary duplication and improving efficiency are key components to quality improvement.
- > We believe that credible performance information supports improvement.
- > We believe that educating the public about health care quality, including appropriate public release of performance information, supports quality improvement and enhances public accountability.
- > We believe that engaging health care providers and consumers in an open dialogue about performance information is a critical part of the quality improvement process.