

Asthma in Schools

Challenges Faced By Detroit's Children

Elliott Attisha DO FAAP

School-Based & Community Health Program

Henry Ford Health System



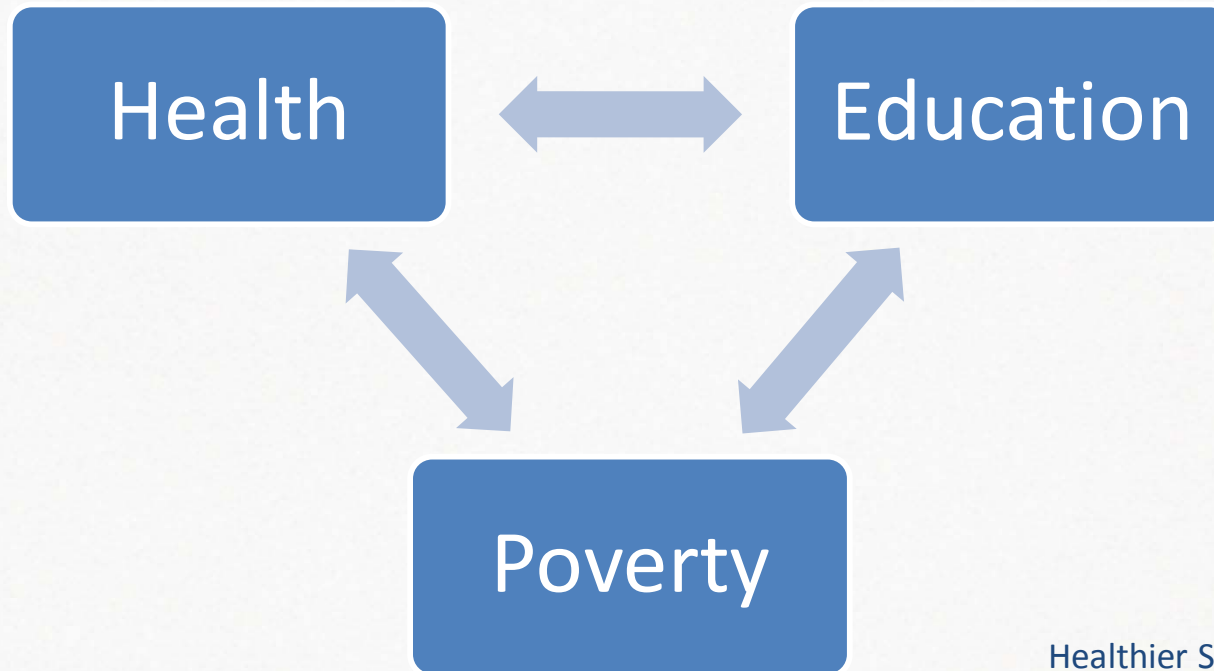
Together, We Can

Healthy Students...

- Are more likely to attend school
- Are better able to focus and stay engaged
- Are more likely to be ready to learn



Reciprocal Causal Relationship



Healthier Students are Better Learners – Charles Basch, PhD

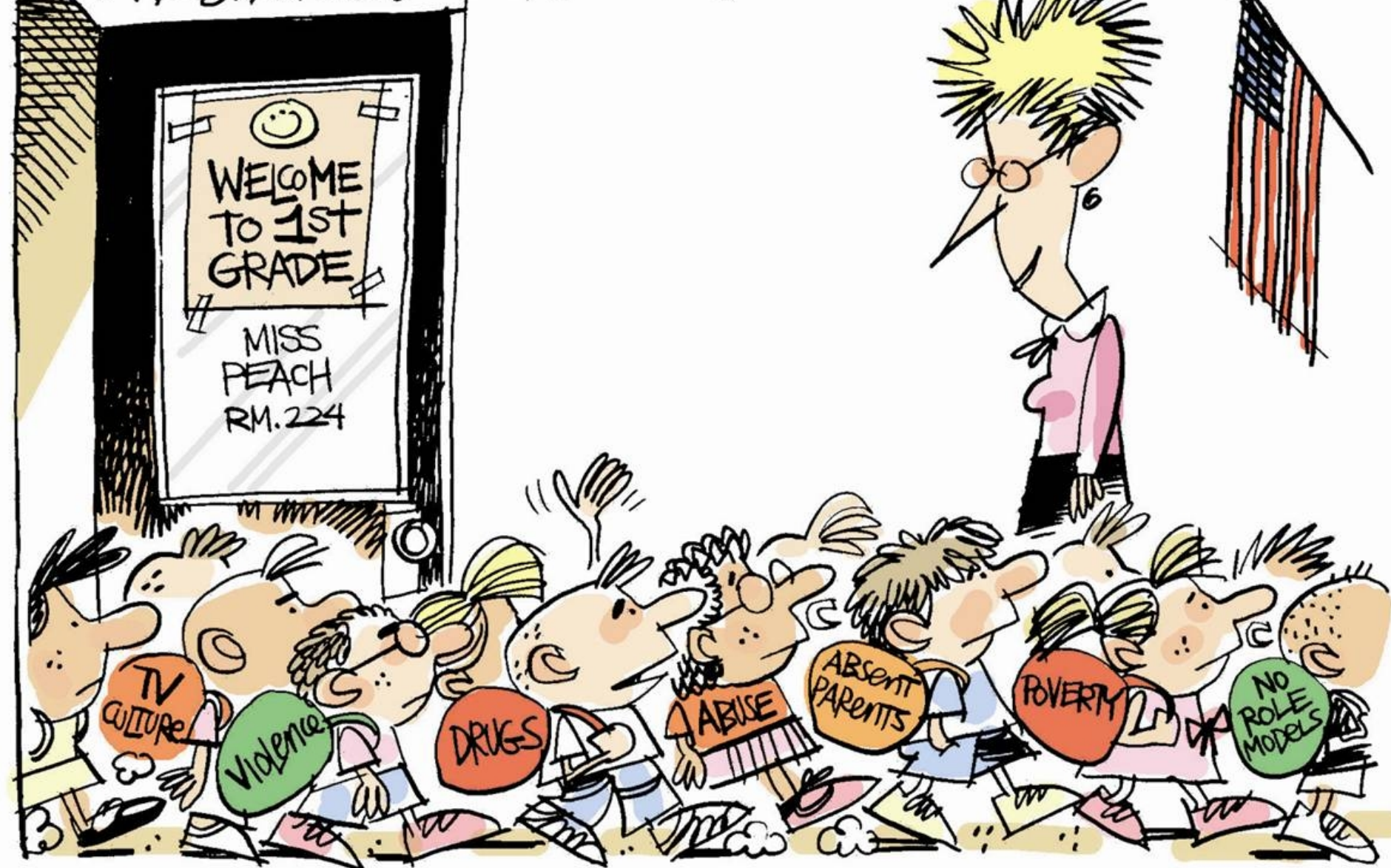
- The environment in which youth live is strongly associated with academic achievement, health, and with social mobility.
- This association is mediated by factors such as family structure, parental involvement at school, and parental involvement in education at home.
- Early intervention is critical!
 - Disparities between poor and non-poor children are already apparent at school entry.

Healthier Students are Better
Learners – Charles Basch, PhD



Together, We Can

FTZ SUMMER @ THE ARCHWAY TOWNSHIP 2008



HI! WE'RE EVERY SOCIAL PROBLEM IN AMERICA THAT YOU CAN NAME ROLLED INTO A HERD OF TOO MANY HUMANS FOR ONE MERE MORTAL TO MANAGE... LET ALONE TEACH. WHERE DO YOU WANT US TO SIT?

Impact of Health Disparities on Learning

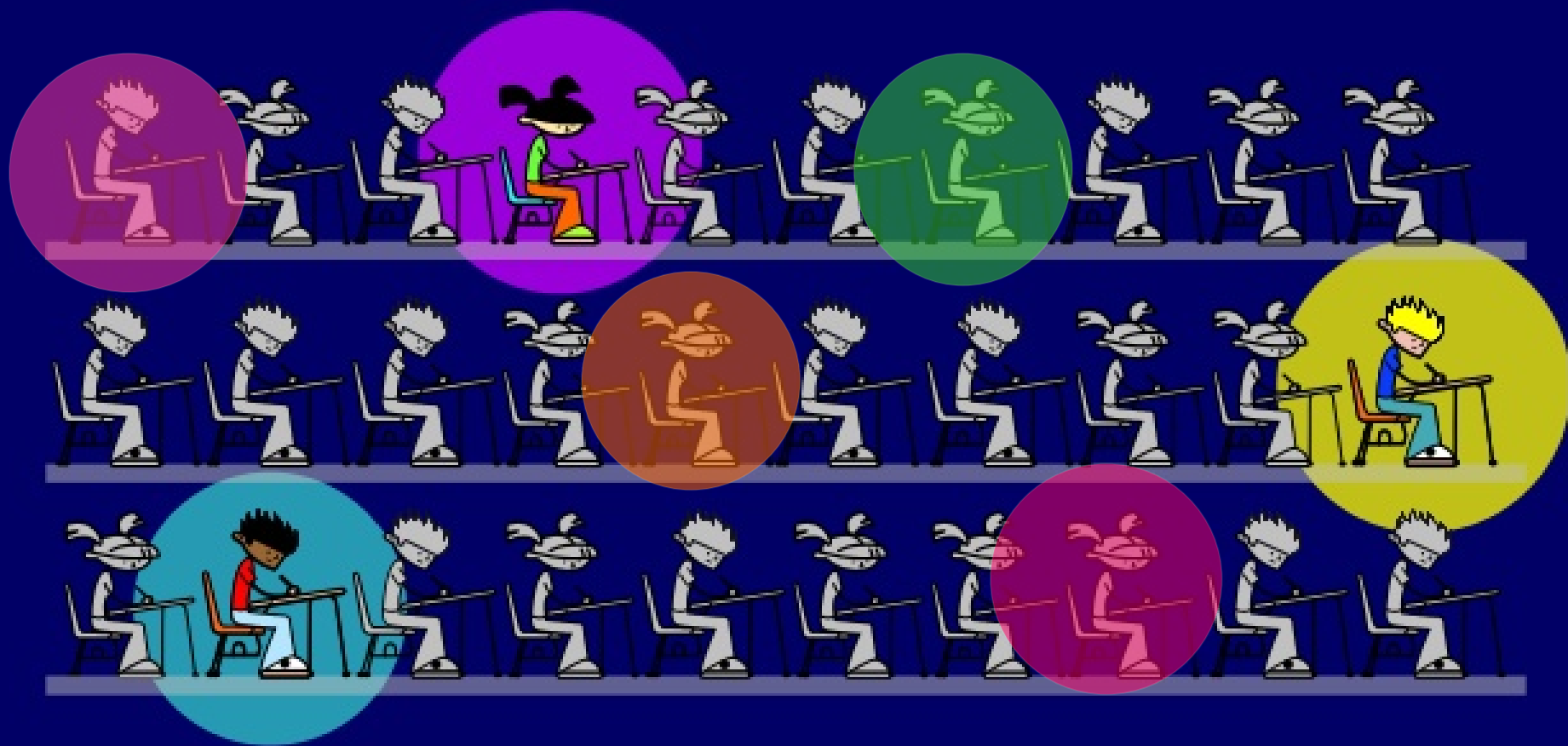
- Low income and minority students are at increased risk of health problems that hinder learning.
- These students are also more likely to attend schools with unhealthy learning environments.

Health in Mind – Improving Education through wellness



Together, We Can

On average, 3 children in a classroom of 30



are likely to have asthma.*

Additional Challenges specific to Detroit

- Limited number of health care providers
- Low literacy rates
- Transportation barriers
- Some of the most polluted zip codes in the country
- Detroit Public Schools in disarray

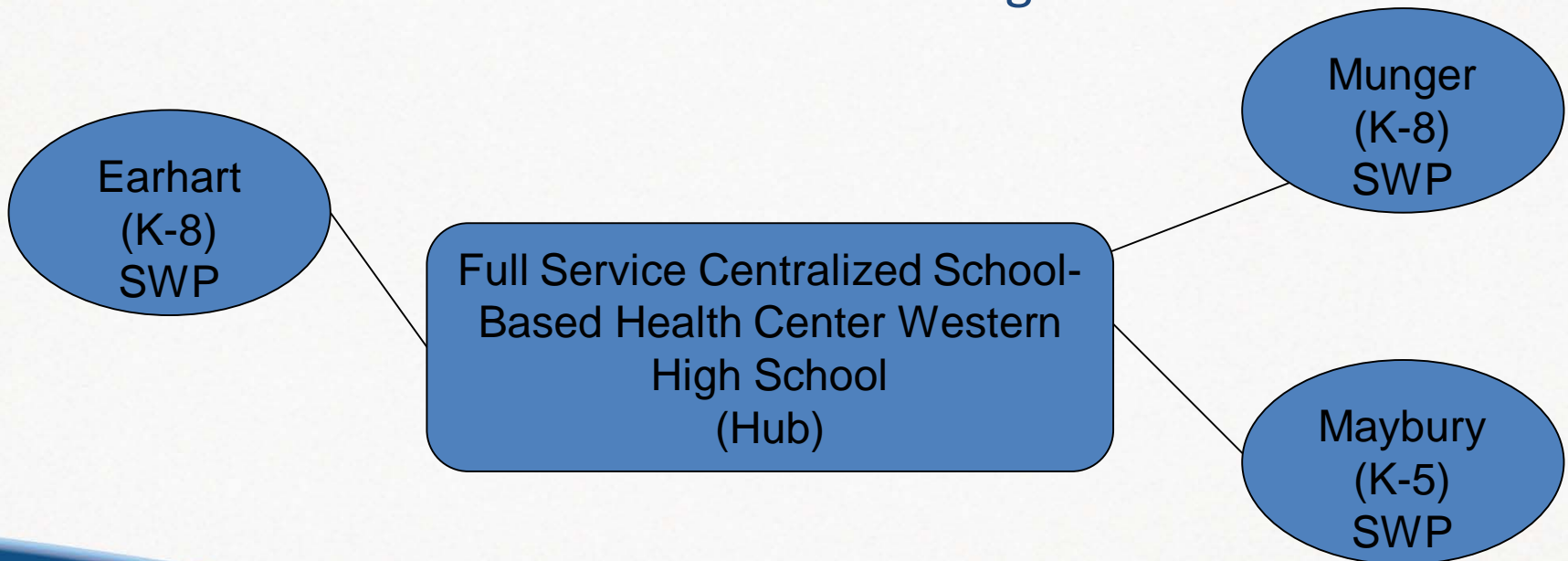
HFHS School-Based & Community Health Program

- Bringing health care services directly to the child at select schools in Detroit and surrounding communities.
 - 8 School-Based Health Centers
 - 3 School-Wellness Sites (Network)
 - 2 Mobile Clinics
 - 3 RN sites (Transformation)



HF SBCHP Network Project

- One of three programs in the State
- Hub and Spoke like model
 - SBHC at Center and RN + LSW at each surrounding school
- Telemedicine initiative will be launching soon



The story of the young patient and the frustrated doctor.



Asthma and Achievement Gap

- Asthma can undermine a child's mental-emotional and physical health
- Children with asthma perform worse on test of concentration
- Virtually every study examining asthma and absenteeism found a positive association

10,000,000

The number of school days missed each year because of asthma.

Why is school attendance so important?

- Students who are chronically absent from school are more likely to:
 - fall behind academically
 - display behavior and discipline problems
 - engage in smoking, drug use, and high risk sexual behaviors
 - drop out of school

Attendance Works



Together, We Can

Asthma and Behavioral Health

- Consistent association between asthma and anxiety/depression
- Anxiety is also associated with increased severity of asthma symptomatology

Expert Rev. Resp Med 6(4), 397-406

Asthma and Adverse Childhood Experiences

Did child live with

- Parent divorced or separated after child was born
 - Parent who died
 - Parent who served time in jail after child was born
 - Anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal or severely depressed
 - Anyone who had a problem with drugs
 - Or see parents, guardians, or any other adults in the home slap, hit, kick, punch or beat each other up
- Strong association between childhood ACE exposure and lifetime asthma in children

Health Issues Manifesting as Behavioral Health

Poorly controlled chronic diseases can lead to falsely diagnosed behavioral problems

- Asthma, eczema, vision/hearing problems and tooth pain can lead to poor sleep, distractibility and discipline issues

We must make sure that schools are aware of all children in school with chronic health issues.



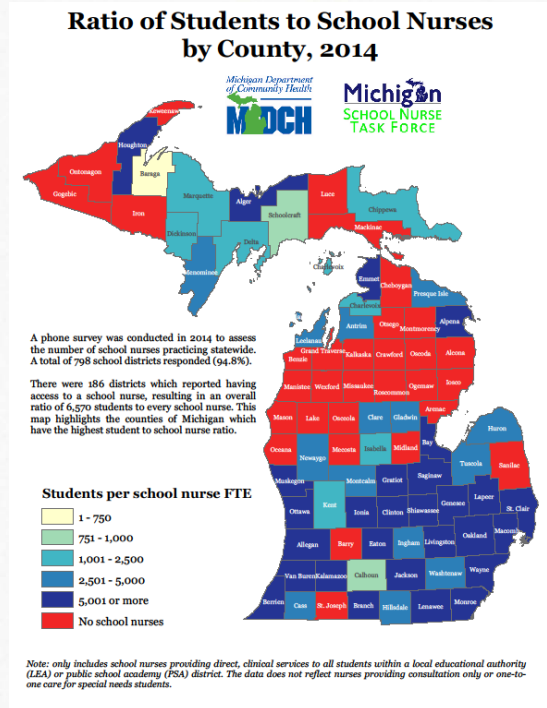
The sad reality...

- DPS currently lacks the resources to enter health information into student electronic health record.
- School (teachers/staff) is unaware of how many asthmatics are in the school.
- Most students do not have an asthma action plan on file
- Most students lack access to rescue inhalers.
- School staff hasn't been provided with asthma education
- Environment in school is unhealthy
- Most schools are without a school nurse...

School Nurses

- Recommended School Nurse to Student Ratio is 1:750
- Michigan's Ratio?

1:6607



School Nurses

- 95% of children who see a school nurse can go back to class.
- If a nurse isn't available then the child goes to the main office, parent gets called, parent has to leave work and child ends up missing school. Sometimes ending up in the ER.
- **Play a significant role in managing chronic disease.**
 - School district in Dallas, Texas, where 90 percent of schools have a full-time nurse, showed no difference in attendance between asthmatic and non-asthmatic students

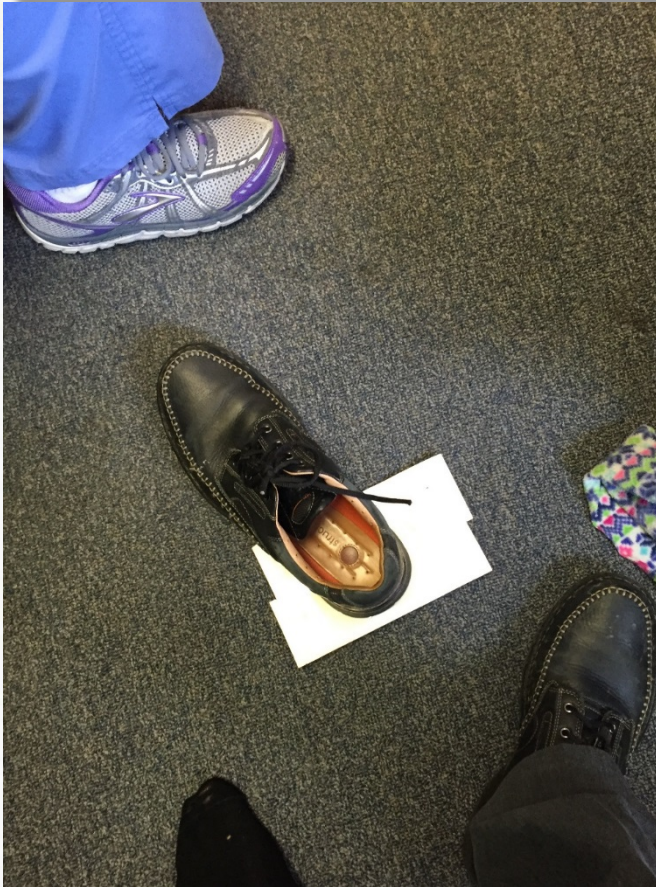
School Role in Asthma

- A coordinated approach
- Identifying all children in the school with asthma
- Ensure every child has an action plan on file and access to rescue medications
- A school wide plan be established for asthma emergencies, including staff training
- Prevent student contact with allergens or irritants, both indoors and outdoors.
- Close tracking of missed school days

Working Towards the Solution

- Children have the right to a healthy learning environment.
 - Schools obviously can't do it alone
 - Essential roles to be also played by families, communities, health care systems, legislators, foundations and more
 - As discussions continue around school reform (DPS), student health and current disparities must be a part of the conversation

A sticky mess...



School Health Priorities

- Provide a safe and health place to learn and play
- Increase access to evidence based school health services
- Improve collection of health and wellness information and data
- Establish a school health team that regularly assesses school health needs
- Develop accountability measures around school climate, health programs and policies
- Build partnerships that support school health services

It Takes a Village

- SBHCs
- School Nurses
- Health Institutions
- Community
- Parents
- Children
- School Systems
- Specialists
- Health Plans
- State and Government Officials
- Foundations
- Community Health Workers
- Volunteers

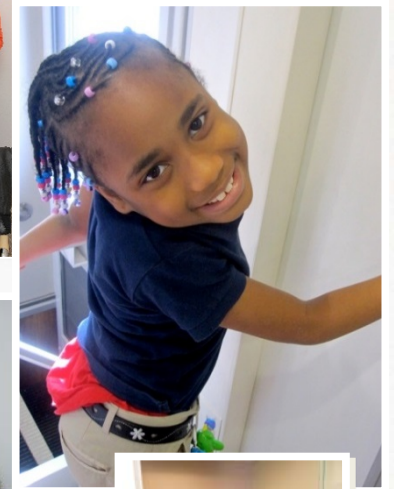
I know asthma is a disease. But I'd rather think of it as a challenge I have to learn how to control. I won't let it keep my child or our family from doing the things we want to do.

~ Author Unknown



Together, We Can

Thank You!



Elliott Attisha DO FAAP
eattish1@hfhs.org
@elliottattisha