



The GW University, RCHN CHF, and Rho Partner with the Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc. (MCAN) to Provide Evidence-based Asthma Management and Sustainable Programming in Community Health Centers

CHAMPS - Community Healthcare for Asthma Management and Prevention of Symptoms - Partnership Kicks off in Tucson, AZ, Grand Rapids, MI Area, and Rincon, PR

WASHINGTON and NEW YORK (October 5, 2011)—The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, the RCHN Community Health Foundation (RCHN CHF), and Rho have partnered with The Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc. (MCAN) to implement a \$4 million collaborative initiative titled the Community Healthcare for Asthma Management and Prevention of Symptoms (CHAMPS). The initial program will focus on five non-profit, federally qualified community health centers (CHCs) located in: Tucson, AZ; Grand Rapids, MI area; and Rincon, PR.

The partnership was formed to address and test strategies for improving asthma care and outcomes in community-based settings through the focused application of care management tools and clinical approaches. Earlier reports authored by GW and supported by the partnership identified CHCs as an ideal setting for working with at-risk children; CHCs serve as a medical home for low-income children and families and report asthma prevalence of 20% among all children treated.

“Attaining a sustainable, quality and efficient program to address the needs of high-risk children with asthma is crucial for improving child health outcomes and reducing health care costs. Providing scientifically rigorous and valid data will be essential in recommending changes in policy that will enable CHCs to continue to provide a higher level of care,” said Anne Rossier Markus, PhD, JD, associate professor of Health Policy in the GW School of Public Health and Health Services and PI for the CHAMPS program.

The main goals of the CHAMPS program are to:

Implement, track and assess asthma case management, counseling, and home environmental assessments and interventions for a targeted group of CHC pediatric patients with poorly controlled asthma, and to evaluate the clinical- and cost-effectiveness of the interventions at each location and across locations;

Develop a sustainability plan, including recommendations for reimbursement and policy changes necessary to facilitate the broad implementation of appropriate interventions;

Learn about successful implementation strategies and help disseminate them to other health centers and provider settings to lead to better outcomes for all asthmatic children.

“Community health centers have a distinguished track record of providing high quality, cost-efficient care and of reducing disparities,” said Feygele Jacobs, M.P.H. M.S., executive vice president and COO of the RCHN Community Health Foundation. “By improving access to primary and preventive care, opening their doors to low income and uninsured patients, and creating team-based medical homes,

CHCs are an ideal setting for improving the care of children with asthma and can be an essential component of the care management strategy.”

“MCAN is pleased to fund such an innovative program that has the potential to impact the lives of children with asthma – especially those who bear a heavy burden of the disease,” said Dr. Floyd Malveaux, Executive Director of MCAN and former Dean of the College of Medicine at Howard University. “Through CHAMPS, these health centers will implement programs that have been shown to be highly effective in lessening the effects of asthma on children and their families.”

CHAMPS builds on the evidence-based interventions documented in two highly regarded scientific studies, the National Cooperative Inner City Asthma Study (NCICAS) and the Inner City Asthma Study (ICAS) and combines elements from both interventions into a ‘hybrid’ approach that will be integrated with each CHC’s current practice.

"This collaboration provides a unique opportunity for us to translate our evidence-based findings from more than 20 years of asthma research into a real-world setting in the hopes of helping the large number of children with asthma who rely on the Community Health Centers for their healthcare," stated Herman Mitchell, PhD, Principal Investigator of the NIH/NIAID Inner City Asthma Consortium, Statistical and Clinical Coordinating Center and Vice President and Senior Scientist at Rho, Inc, Chapel Hill, NC.

For more information about the CHAMPS program, visit: <http://gwhealthpolicy.org/champs>.

About the Merck Childhood Asthma Network

The Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc. (MCAN) is a separately incorporated, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization established to address the complex and growing problem of pediatric asthma. Funded by the Merck Company Foundation, and led by Floyd Malveaux, MD, PhD, a nationally recognized expert in asthma and allergic diseases and former Dean of the Howard University College of Medicine, MCAN is specifically focused on enhancing access to quality asthma care and management for children in the United States. For more information, visit www.mcanonline.org.

About the RCHN Community Health Foundation

The RCHN Community Health Foundation, founded in October 2005, is a not-for-profit operating foundation whose mission is to support community health centers through strategic investment, outreach, education, and cutting-edge health policy research. The only foundation in the country dedicated to community health centers, the Foundation builds on health centers’ 40-year commitment to the provision of accessible, high quality, community-based healthcare services for underserved and medically vulnerable populations. The Foundation’s gift to the Geiger Gibson program supports health center research and scholarship. For more information on RCHN CHF, visit www.rchnfoundation.org.

About the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services:

Established in July 1997, the School of Public Health and Health Services brought together three longstanding university programs in the schools of medicine, business, and education that we have since expanded substantially. Today, more than 1,100 students from nearly every U.S. state and more than 40 nations pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral-level degrees in public health. Our student body is one of the most ethnically diverse among the nation's private schools of public health. <http://sphhs.gwumc.edu/>

About Rho

Rho, a privately-held, contract research organization (CRO) located in Chapel Hill, NC, has been a

trusted partner to pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical device companies as well as academic and government organizations for more than 25 years. Rho has collaborated in the design and analysis of clinical trials, mechanistic and biomarker studies, preclinical studies, non-interventional studies, translational studies, and has participated in numerous publications from these efforts.. For more information, visit www.rhoworld.com.