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Community

IMPACT REPORT



Who We Are

Asthma Canada is the only national charity solely devoted to improving the lives of Canadians living with asthma and respiratory allergies. For over 46 years, we have proudly served as the voice for Canadians affected by asthma.

Our mission is to help Canadians with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy and research.

Our vision is a future without asthma.

Asthma In Canada

STATS & FACTS

Asthma is the **third** most common chronic disease among Canadians. The seriousness of asthma is often underestimated—for many Canadians, asthma impacts every aspect of daily life, and tragically, roughly four Canadian families lose a loved one to asthma each week.

Asthma affects more than

3.8 million

Canadians

Canadians living with Severe Asthma are among the most affected by this disease, and for many, it is a struggle to keep asthma symptoms under control. Everyone deserves to live healthy, symptom-free lives and Asthma Canada will continue to provide education and support to help all Canadians with Severe Asthma manage their disease.

An estimated

150,000-250,000

Canadians live with Severe Asthma

Joint Letter From CEO & Chair

Every Canadian with asthma deserves a healthy and symptom-free life, and we're proud to say that in 2019 we took significant strides in extending our reach within our community to equip more Canadians with the tools needed to take control of their disease.

First and foremost, we launched a number of new initiatives to better serve those most affected by asthma—the young, the elderly, and those with Severe Asthma—to ensure that no one living with asthma falls through the cracks.

We continued to provide vital support services through our core programs, including our Asthma & Allergy HelpLine, Asthma Pals Peer Mentorship program and our Speaker Series Webinars.

We also strengthened our educational offerings to our community by publishing new resources for people of all ages, such as a new booklet for seniors: *Living Well With Asthma, A Guide for Asthma Management in Older Adults* and a new children's Asthma Action Plan, a critical tool to help children, their caregivers, and healthcare provider create a personalized plan to better manage asthma.

Through our advocacy efforts, we spearheaded positive change on issues directly linked to improving the lives of Canadians with asthma. In 2019, we were actively involved in advocacy initiatives on the national stage, on a range of topics including national pharmacare, patient rights and clean air and energy.

We took a meaningful step towards expanding our national voice by launching our first annual asthma survey to better understand our community and share those findings with policy makers. We remain tireless in our pursuit of improved health outcomes for those with asthma and will continue to raise the voice of the asthma community.

Research remained a top priority and through our National Research Program we are helping lay the foundations for a future without asthma. In the past year, we have supported both graduate student researchers and a lead investigator working to improve our understanding of this chronic disease so that one day, asthma can be cured.

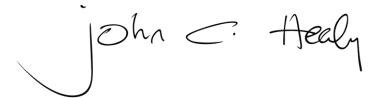
All of our accomplishments were only made possible thanks to the continued trust and support of our incredible donors, partners, volunteers, medical and scientific community and stakeholders. Through collaboration, we ensured increased capacity to help serve Canadians with asthma and build a more inclusive community.

We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to be the voice for all Canadians with asthma. We strive in every action and initiative, to safeguard people struggling with asthma and to ultimately stop asthma attacks and save lives.

Looking ahead, Asthma Canada will continue our 46-year legacy of helping Canadians with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy and research.



Vanessa Foran
President & CEO



John Healy
Chair



LIVING LIFE WITH SEVERE ASTHMA

I am a senior living with Severe Asthma. I was first diagnosed with asthma in my 50s, but as I entered my early 70s, my regular asthma medication stopped working and I got extremely sick. I coughed constantly, lost a lot of weight, and was so out of breath that I could hardly walk a block — my asthma was out of control. Eventually, after specialist visits and the support of Asthma Canada, I was able to access the care I needed to get my asthma back under control.

Nowadays, I seldom cough and I walk a lot. In fact, my Fitbit says that in the past few years, I have walked the equivalent of crossing the Sahara Desert! Sometimes it has felt like I was crossing the Sahara, but the journey was worth it.

Asthma is a serious disease. Although it is rarely life-threatening, it can seriously damage a patient's quality of life. It's bad enough to be coughing all the time, but it is very frightening to find you can't breathe or to see your child panting for his life. Patients need to know as much as possible about their asthma so that they can participate effectively in their treatment or advocate successfully for better treatment. Asthma can be managed but patients must know enough to do be able to do their part.

Asthma cannot be cured, however with the right diagnosis and appropriate medication, asthma can be managed.

For example, a few years ago, my grandson spent Christmas in the hospital because of asthma, his oxygen level was too low. Luckily, Santa found him and gave him an electric helicopter. Even luckier, the hospital assessed him, gave him the treatment needed, and he quickly got better. His parents now take him to an asthma clinic where he gets regular check-ups and has his medications monitored. These days, no one would ever guess he has asthma.

Even older adults with Severe Asthma, patients like myself, can live active, fun lives if we have the right medical team, the right diagnosis and the right medications. We have a job too. As patients, we need to learn as much as we can about asthma, follow our doctor's directions, take our medications, and give feedback on what is or is not working. One other thing - asthma patients need an Asthma Action Plan telling them what to do when their symptoms reappear or worsen. I recently had a mild exacerbation and could not contact my specialist. I upped my medication according to my Action Plan and within a week, I was feeling fine again.

Unfortunately, many asthma patients face difficulties getting the things they need to manage their asthma. In some places, it is impossible to get your own GP, let alone an asthma specialist. Spirometry and other tests can be very hard to access and the high cost of drugs makes it impossible for them to fill their prescriptions. What to do? Don't give up. Make a big fuss (also called self-advocating) or get a friend or family member to help you navigate the system. Write your MLA or MPP. Contact Asthma Canada, they are always there to help patients in need.

“

When I was desperate, I contacted Asthma Canada and they gave me the advice and moral support I needed to get back on track.



My experience with the Asthma Canada Member Alliance started about seven years ago when my usual asthma medications stopped working. I was having frequent, unexplained exacerbations but I could not get an appointment for spirometry. I discovered Asthma Canada and reached out for help and was encouraged to self-advocate. I wrote to several politicians and suddenly things changed.

Once I was on the road to recovery, I volunteered with Asthma Canada as a member of the Asthma Canada Member Alliance. With the support of their staff, we held monthly phone meetings and met a couple of times in Toronto where we participated in Asthma Canada's Annual Conferences.

I have since volunteered on various projects including going to Ottawa to advocate for national pharmacare and providing patient input for various Asthma Canada publications and projects such as the Patient Bill of Rights.

My experience as part of the Asthma Canada Member Alliance has provided me with the opportunity to learn a lot about asthma, to meet others who have the same illness and are working hard to manage it and to realize that patients must advocate for their rights. I feel extremely grateful to Asthma Canada for giving me the opportunity to use my asthma experience to help others.

Penny Grant



EDUCATION

PROVIDING THE ASTHMA COMMUNITY WITH EVIDENCE-BASED EDUCATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Helping Canadians Breathe Easy

Education is a vital aspect of our mission. Asthma Canada offers a variety of educational tools for patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

Our resources and programs are designed to ensure that every Canadian with asthma has access to evidence-based information to make informed decisions from an empowered position, in order to live a healthy and symptom-free life.

Asthma & Allergy HelpLine

Our national Asthma & Allergy HelpLine remains one of our most vital, front-line services — providing bilingual and personalized support to Canadians with questions about their asthma or respiratory allergies.

This year, we connected hundreds of people, including patients, parents, and caregivers to Certified Respiratory Educators (CREs) who answered their questions with evidence-based information and support.

In 2019, we expanded our service by increasing the number of CREs up to a total of eight, allowing us to answer even more enquiries, offer improved regionalized support and help more Canadians with asthma.

Speaker Series Webinars

In an increasingly digital world, it's more important than ever to ensure asthma education is accessible and interactive. Our Speaker Series Webinars play an important role in giving our community easy access to leading asthma experts speaking on a range of topics related to asthma.

In 2019, we hosted four webinars on important subjects ranging from rescue inhaler overuse to living with asthma in older adults.

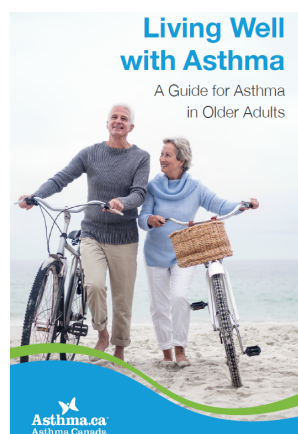
The webinar series continues to provide our viewers with practical information that can help improve asthma management. To view previous webinar recordings, you can visit our [website](#).

Resources and Campaigns

In 2019, we added two crucial publications to our library of resources: *Living Well with Asthma, A Guide for Asthma in Older Adults* and we created a new Children's Asthma Action Plan, an important tool in helping children and their caregivers manage asthma safely.

We continued to educate our community on vaccinations, Severe Asthma, inhaler overuse and the September Asthma Peak, through a series of integrated social media and digital campaigns.

We created new PSA videos on the seriousness of asthma to help raise awareness and encourage more Canadians to take control over their asthma. We also began the update and redesign of our [asthma.ca](#) website, which we consider to be our most valuable education tool.



To download your own copy of these new resources or to access our library of education resources please visit:

<https://asthma.ca/resources>



APPROXIMATELY 850,000 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 14 ARE DIAGNOSED WITH ASTHMA IN CANADA

Asthma is the most common chronic disease among children in Canada and is a major cause of hospitalizations for children. It is also the leading cause of absenteeism from school.

Asthma Canada provides education and support programs like our Asthma Pals Peer Mentorship Program to help children manage their asthma and stay healthy.



Asthma Pals Peer Mentorship Program

The Asthma Pals Peer Mentorship Program is part of our core programs and services. Asthma Pals is an online and interactive program which connects children aged 7-11 affected by asthma to other kids from across the country and older peer-mentors to help guide them in gaining confidence in living with and managing the disease.

Children use their computer to share stories, ideas, and feelings with each other, while answering questions about life with asthma, playing games and activities, and learning how to brainstorm, problem solve, and set goals together.

Our 2019 Asthma Pals session began in March and ran for eight weeks, covering topics such as stigma, bullying, exercising with asthma, and healthy living. It's wonderful to see the positive impact of peer mentorship in action.

“My daughter feels different and out of sync with her class and teammates. They often minimize her condition and say she is attention seeking.

A parent writing about their daughter's asthma on our first annual survey

Programs like the Asthma Pals Peer Mentorship Program play an important role in helping children with asthma come to terms with living with asthma, and learn how to overcome stigma and stay healthy. No child should ever have to face asthma alone.

Asthma Canada Member Alliance

The Asthma Canada Member Alliance (ACMA) is the patient arm and voice of Asthma Canada. Some of its members serve in an advisory capacity with active volunteers to provide valuable input on Asthma Canada's programs and initiatives and increase awareness and education about asthma and respiratory allergies within Canada.

ACMA represents the full spectrum of people affected by asthma – including those living with the disease, parents, caregivers, healthcare professionals, educators and family and friends with a focus on self-empowerment, advocacy and education.

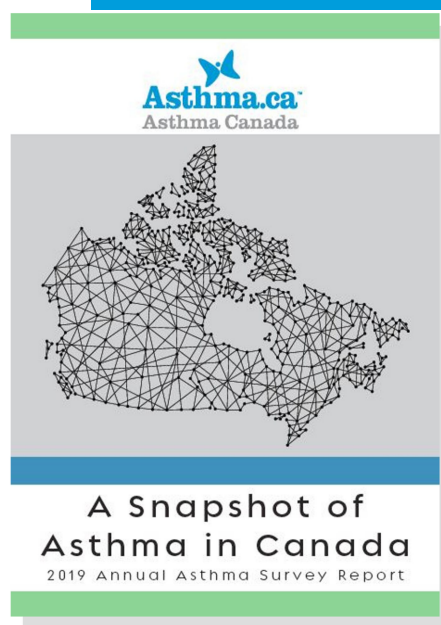
Through working with the ACMA community, Asthma Canada provides a variety of programs and services to people with asthma in Canada. With a national membership, ACMA members are being provided with high-quality educational resources through our e-newsletter and a variety of programs which allow them to engage and better manage their asthma symptoms.

In 2019, Asthma Canada launched its first annual broad-based survey of the Canadian asthma community. The survey was open to people with all levels of severity – mild, moderate and severe, and measures: quality of care, asthma management and challenges living with asthma. The findings revealed gaps that can be addressed through education and policy and inform the work that we do in the future. The results from the survey will inform our strategies moving forward on how best to serve Canadians with asthma.

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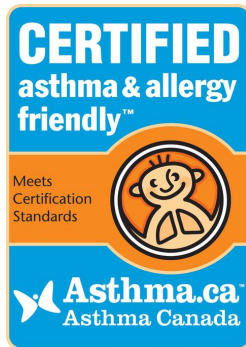
Our survey highlighted three particularly vulnerable groups: people with low income, those with Severe Asthma, and young adults between 18 and 34 years old. As my daughter enters this age group, along with countless others as they begin their independent lives, they are at a higher risk of falling through the cracks of our healthcare system.

Vanessa Foran
President & CEO



You can read the full 2019 Annual Asthma Survey Report by clicking the button below:

[Read the Report](#)



Asthma & Allergy Friendly™ Program

Asthma Canada continued our partnership with Allergy Standards Limited through the Asthma & Allergy Friendly™ Certification Program, which identifies, scientifically tests and certifies products that are better suited to creating a healthy home environment for people with asthma and respiratory allergies.

This partnership and program help ensure that our community can make informed decisions when looking for products to add to their home.

Program Partners:





Advocacy

RAISING THE VOICE OF THE ASTHMA COMMUNITY

Advocating for Change

Asthma Canada remains dedicated to raising the voice of the asthma community on critical policy issues including equitable access to medications, treatment and emission-free clean air.

In 2019, a key issue that remained vitally important to us is the development of a national pharmacare strategy that is focused on best health outcomes. To this end, we continued our national letter writing campaign on this issue, encouraging members of our community to take action by sending letters to their government officials highlighting how the cost of medications impacts their lives and ability to manage their asthma. We stand strong on this issue and will continue to fight for a national pharmacare strategy that fills gaps in care and is centred on best health outcomes, rather than ability to pay.

We also advocated for access to new treatments by voicing our concerns about Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) Reform, which as proposed, will achieve the laudable goal of reducing medication prices but will also have a negative impact for our community by reducing access to new and innovative medicines as well as clinical trials in Canada.

In celebration of World Asthma Day, members of Asthma Canada's staff, Board, and medical committee teamed up with community members to meet with MPPs at Queen's Park on May 7, 2019, to raise awareness and launch our Severe Asthma Patient Charter. We continued valuable discussions with MPPs throughout the year, presenting three key advocacy priorities: expanding OHIP+ to cover the uninsured and underinsured, highlighting the Severe Asthma Patient Charter and calling for a renewed focus on clean air, by transitioning public transit systems to electric power to reduce emissions. In addition, we also continued our partnership with the Ontario Public Health Association on the Make It Better Campaign, which centers on creating a unified approach to children's health and climate change.

Asthma Canada will continue working to ensure that the voices of our community are heard on important issues that affect the health of Canadians with asthma and the air we breathe.

Asthma Canada staff meeting with government representatives at Queen's Park throughout the year.

Our advocacy priorities remain access to medications, clean air and energy, and improved health outcomes for all Canadians with asthma.



“ It is time for a national conversation on access to medicines. Too many Canadian families are having difficulties affording medications and having to prioritize between medicine, food or rent. No one should have to choose between feeding their families and breathing.

Vanessa Foran
President & CEO

“ Asthma meds are too expensive for a person on minimum wage and no benefits. Eat or breathe, what a choice.

A respondent to our annual asthma survey





Research

UNLOCKING A FUTURE WITHOUT ASTHMA

National Research Program

Acknowledging excellence in asthma research remains a core pillar of our mission delivery. In 2019, Asthma Canada was proud to honour and support a number of talented asthma researchers working to expand our understanding of this chronic disease and discover better treatments while progressing towards finding a cure for asthma.

In 2019, we began a partnership with The Canadian Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF) to award training grants to talented graduate student researchers conducting asthma research. This key partnership, allows us to invest in the future of asthma research in Canada.

Through our National Research Program, we awarded grants to an experienced Lead Investigator while also supporting three graduate student asthma researchers through our Graduate Student Research Awards. Our two research funds, The Goran-Enhoring Research Fund and Bastable-Potts Research Fund allow us to investigate both early-onset and late-onset asthma respectively and are what make our National Research Program possible.

Lead Investigator Award

Our annual Leadership Award demonstrably recognizes the outstanding research contributions of an experienced lead investigator working in the respiratory field.

We were pleased to present our 2019 award to Dr. Samir Gupta recognizing the importance of his groundbreaking research on knowledge translation in primary care, across the spectrum of respiratory illness, with a focus on electronic tools and asthma.

“Asthma Canada has provided my research group with invaluable insights into the perspectives of patients with asthma over the years. Now, receiving this award is a true validation of our success in keeping patients at the center of our research and quality improvement endeavours,” said Dr. Gupta. “With the ongoing support of partners like Asthma Canada, I strongly believe that our innovative tool – the Electronic Asthma Management System (eAMS) - will transform the care of asthma patients across Canada.”

Samir Gupta is a clinician-scientist at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael’s Hospital and an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto. He is a staff respirologist in the Division of Respirology at St. Michael’s Hospital. He completed his Master’s degree in Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Toronto, followed by a fellowship in Knowledge Translation Research. His main research interest is in knowledge translation in primary care, across the spectrum of respiratory illness, with a focus on electronic tools and asthma.



Above: Dr. Samir Gupta, recipient of Asthma Canada's 2019 Lead Investigator Award.



We invest in the next generation of leading asthma researchers

There is currently no cure for asthma, and every day in Canada 317 people are newly diagnosed with asthma.

Through our National Research Program and Graduate Student Research Awards, we support both upcoming and leading asthma researchers working to expand our knowledge and discover a cure.

Graduate Student Research Awards

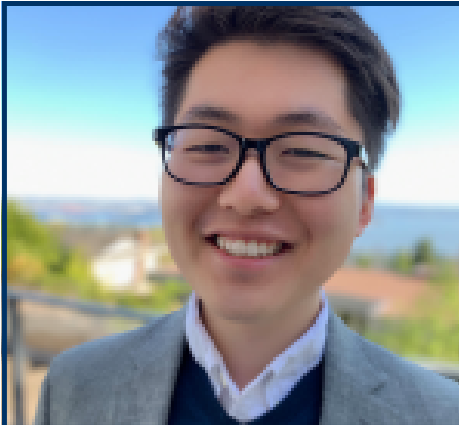
Asthma Canada's annual Graduate Student Research awards allow us to support the work of Masters and PhD level graduate student researchers from across the country, who are conducting research to improve the lives of Canadians with asthma by furthering our understanding of the causes, treatment and prevention of asthma.

In 2019, we awarded \$20,000 grants to two PhD level student researchers and one \$10,000 grant to a Masters level student researcher. These awards allow us to continue to invest in the training and development of promising new investigators and support their innovative research projects. We are proud of the role we play in fostering the next generation of leading asthma researchers in Canada.



Jo-Chiao Wang - Université de Montréal

Jo-Chiao is a PhD recipient of the Bastable-Potts Graduate Student Research Award for his work into unravelling the role of lung nociceptor neurons in the initiation of pollution-exacerbated allergic asthma.



Samuel Shin - University of British Columbia

Samuel is a MSc recipient of the Bastable-Potts Graduate Student Research Award for his research investigating the role of innate lymphoid cells in the onset of chronic asthma and lung fibrosis. He hopes that findings from this work can create novel therapeutic options and provide permanent relief for patients suffering from chronic asthma.



Moira Dion - Université Laval

Moira is a PhD recipient of the Goran-Enhorning Graduate Student Research Award for her research into the development of computer tools to precisely identify bacteriophages and what bacteria they infect. She will then determine if children that develop asthma have different bacteriophages, which will contribute to understanding what triggers asthma in early life.



HELPING CANADIANS WITH ASTHMA BREATHE EASY, TOGETHER.

Through collaborations and the generosity of exceptional individuals, corporate partners and forward-thinking foundations, Asthma Canada is able to continue transforming the lives of those affected by asthma.

You're not just making a donation, you're helping cure asthma.

Thank you.

WHY WE FIGHT:

On April 29, 2018, Rudhro Prince suffered a sudden and severe asthma attack. After fighting for his life for 11 days, Rudhro tragically passed away. He was only eight years old.



[Click here or visit \[asthma.ca\]\(http://asthma.ca\) to watch Rudhro's story](#)

In 2019, Rudhro's family joined with us in our mission and helped raise asthma awareness by sharing their story in our PSA project, which was distributed digitally.

The Prince family also hosted their first annual Rudhro Prince Memorial Asthma Walk, and donated \$10,000 to Asthma Canada. We are so thankful to the Prince family for their enduring strength and generosity.

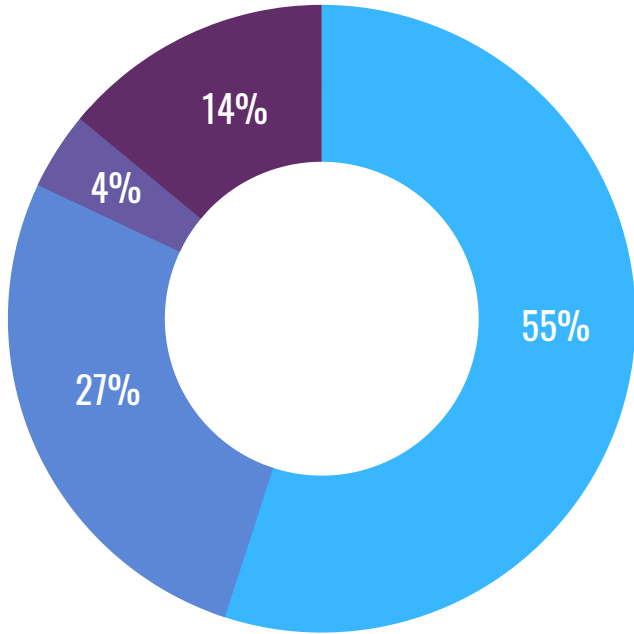
Asthma Canada, through the support of our donors and amazing community will continue the vital work of raising asthma awareness to help stop asthma attacks and save lives.

Together, we will achieve a future without asthma.



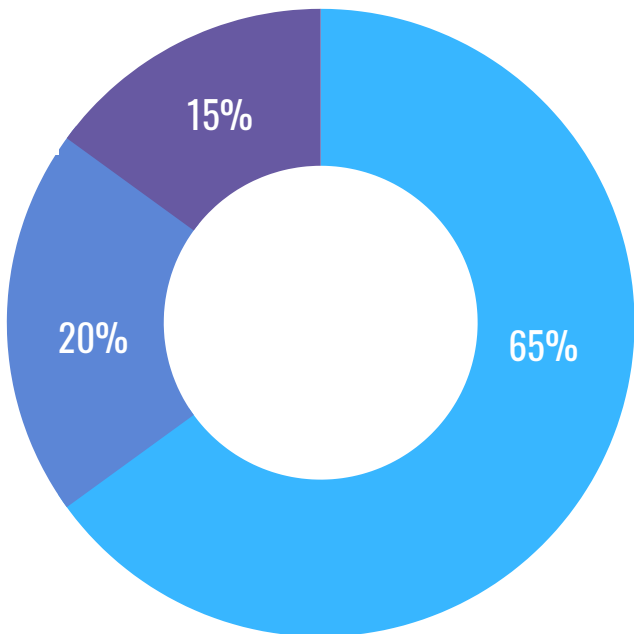
Asthma Canada President & CEO Vanessa Foran accepting a donation from the Prince family following the first annual Rudhro Prince Memorial Asthma Walk.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Sources of Revenue

Corporate & Foundation Giving	\$585,714
Individual Giving & Bequests	\$290,320
Asthma & Allergy Friendly Certification Program	\$44,677
Investment & Other	\$148,300



How The Money Was Used

Mission Delivery (Education, Advocacy & Research)	\$551,088
Fundraising	\$172,941
Operations	\$124,316

ASTHMA CANADA

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Charitable Registration Number:
898537048 RR0001

Join the Asthma Canada Member Alliance today and get the latest asthma information delivered straight to your inbox: asthma.ca/join

