

Using Telemedicine to Provide Asthma Education

SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM PROVIDES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH ASTHMA KNOWLEDGE. *By Leslie Zganjar*

A SCHOOL-BASED ASTHMA EDUCATION program was launched in DeKalb County in September by the College of Community Health Sciences.

Seven elementary students at the Ruhama Junior High School in Fort Payne, Ala., which serves students in Kindergarten through the eighth grade, participated in the first session of the program on Sept. 18. Also participating were five parents, two school nurses and the school principal.

The education program was conducted from CCHS via telemedicine by Dr. Karen Burgess, associate professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics, and Beth Smith, a nurse practitioner in the Faculty-Staff Clinic at University Medical Center, which the College operates. This first group of participants will attend a total of four sessions, on consecutive Thursdays, from 1 pm to 1:30 pm. Then, a new group will participate, also on four consecutive Thursdays.

The asthma education program is being funded with a \$25,000 gift from BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 137,091 children in Alabama had asthma in 2007, a prevalence rate of 12.3 percent, which compares to the U.S. rate of 9 percent.

CCHS has provided specialty health care via telemedicine across the state for a number of years, including: telepsychiatry services to the DeKalb County Youth Services; telepsychiatry services to West Alabama Mental Health Care Center, with sites in Marengo, Choctaw, Greene, Hale and Sumter counties; and diabetes education via telemedicine to a number of rural Alabama communities in Sumter, Pickens and Clarke counties.



ASTHMA EDUCATION PROGRAM

FIRST SESSION SEPT. 18:
Seven students (Kindergarten - eighth grade)
Five parents
Two school nurses
School principal

OTHER TELEMEDICINE SERVICES



DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

45 patients in Sumter, Pickens and Clarke counties in 2013.
Efforts underway to expand to Lamar and Walker counties.



TELEPSYCHIATRY

240 patients in DeKalb, Marengo, Choctaw, Greene, Hale and Sumter counties in 2013.