

Outreach for the Air Quality Health Index
and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign
to Runners and Participants in organized race events
located in Toronto

Final Report

September 2012

Submitted to: Toronto Public Health



Submitted by:
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II. Project Background

The role of the Asthma Society of Canada in promoting the AQHI and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign

The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) is committed to helping asthma patients breathe easier, and therefore recognizes the vital importance of clean air and a healthy environment. Numerous studies from Canada and around the world suggests that air pollution is a key trigger for the exacerbation of asthma and higher levels of air pollution result in a rapid increase in the number of hospitalizations due to asthma.^{i ii,iii,iv,v,vi,vii,viii} According to Health Canada, thousands of premature deaths and hospitalizations can be linked to air pollution each year. Those most at risk of health problems from poor air quality include: children, seniors and people with pre-existing respiratory and cardiac conditions. Air pollution worsens asthma, allergies, bronchitis and heart problems. As well, it irritates the eyes, nose and throat, and makes it difficult for even healthy lungs to work well. The public needs an accurate warning system so that they can take action to protect them from air pollution. In response to this, Environment Canada and Health Canada led the development of a health-based air quality index, known as the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI). The AQHI incorporates the most recent scientific information on the health effects of key air pollutants – ground level ozone, particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. It measures local air pollution and reports the health risk on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the lowest risk to health. While the AQHI helps protect people from air pollution, Toronto Public Health (TPH) created a social marketing campaign to reduce air pollution. Entitled 20/20 The Way to Clean Air^{ix}, this campaign is designed to help individuals reduce both home energy use and vehicle use by 20%.

There are a variety of programs and services provided by the ASC geared towards people with asthma and associated allergies and their families through direct outreach as well as working with community-based healthcare professionals. Specifically, the ASC has identified an opportunity to target individuals with asthma who are trying or continuing to become fit and healthy. The ASC began working with this group of people with asthma with the creation of the Team Asthma program in 2011. The Team Asthma Program was designed to promote active and healthy living among people with asthma and is another way to demonstrate that asthma should not be an obstacle to physical activity. Through the annual participation in several organized races throughout Canada, Team Asthma members wear the Team Asthma logo proudly as they interact and educate other race participants about the program and about living active and healthy lives while keeping their asthma under control and their lives symptom free. Through the involvement of Team Asthma in past event such as these, the ASC believes that there is an opportunity to promote the AQHI and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign to all participants in organized races throughout Toronto.

Additionally, the ASC in continually promoting the AQHI and the 20/20 campaign through the engagement of the National Asthma Patient Alliance (NAPA), a membership-based group of the Asthma Society of Canada since the *Outreach for the Air Quality Health Index and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign to people with asthma and associated allergies residing in*

Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) project. NAPA is a grassroots patient group of volunteers from across the country, with a strong representation in Toronto and the GTA, whose aim is to increase patient awareness about how to achieve optimal asthma control, address communication and advocacy needs of this chronic disease, and build a network of patient volunteers dedicated to improving asthma care and education. The NAPA membership is constantly growing and to date consists of 310 active members residing in Toronto and the GTA. The ASC will look into opportunities to recruit new Team Asthma members from individuals already involved in athletic events in Toronto. The NAPA advocacy initiatives present excellent ongoing opportunities for the AQHI and related messages to reach targeted sensitive populations, and the ASC has already made the index an integral part of its regular educational and outreach activities.

1. Project Goals and Objectives

The main goal of the project *“Outreach for the Air Quality Health Index and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign to Runners and Participants in organized race events located in Toronto”* was to increase the number of individuals receiving information on the AQHI and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign by targeting organized running events in Toronto. The key objectives of the project were as follows:

- Organize activities and promote the AQHI and the 20/20 campaign to runners between April 2012 and August 2012 using exciting ASC resources and outreach programs
- Outreach to a minimum of 500 people including those with asthma and associated allergies through distribution of educational materials to people who regularly exercise outdoors by targeting participants in organized running events.
- Foster longer-term, sustainable information dissemination to people with asthma and associated allergies through the “Team Asthma”, “Asthma Ambassadors” and “NAPA” programs past the completion of this project by recruiting additional Team Asthma and/or NAPA members.
- Evaluate success of the approach or outreach event(s) at the completion of the project.

2. Project Activities

In the proposal submitted to Toronto Public Health on March 12, 2012, the Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) listed a number of project activities related to the promotion of the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign to Runners and Participants in organized race events located in Toronto. This final report outlines the project activities conducted that have been either confirmed or completed as of September 21, 2012. New materials have been developed by the ASC directed at individuals who are already

participating in regular outdoor activities. All materials and documents associated with this project can be found in the Appendices at the end of the report.

III. Promoting the AQHI and 20/20 Campaign to individuals regularly engaged in outdoor physical activity by targeting participants in organized running events in Toronto

1. Develop Reference Card for Race Events

As outlined in the original proposal, the ASC developed a new resource which promotes both the Air Quality Health Index and Team Asthma. This resource was designed to appeal specifically to people who were already active in physical activities outdoors. This Reference Card was created with the assistance of Certified Asthma Educators (CAE). Upon completion, the Reference Card was reviewed by the ASC's team of CAE's, NAPA Executive Committee members and ASC staff. However, the survey results indicated that the card, as originally designed, was flawed. For example, of those surveyed, only 54.6% indicated that they would recommend this Reference Card be used by runners with asthma. Additionally only 45.4% felt that the language level was satisfactory or fair. Of the greatest concern was that 63.6% of survey respondents felt that the amount of information provided on the test card was too detailed and 45.5% felt that the Reference Card failed to deliver information clearly.

After reviewing this information the Reference Card was significantly redesigned in an effort to reduce the volume of text and adjust the layout to present the information more clearly. A copy of the final Reference Card design can be found in Appendix 1.

Additionally, the ASC intended to use a previously designed AQHI plastic sticker which featured the AQHI scale and explained how each AQHI level affected both the at-risk and general population. A copy of the sticker can be found in Appendix 2.

2. Create Electronic Outreach Package

Following the creation of the new Reference Card, the ASC developed an electronic outreach package which was used to contact race organizers. The outreach package contained a digital copy of the Reference Card (Appendix 1), a digital copy of the AQHI sticker (Appendix 2), and a letter to the specific race organizer (Appendix 3).

This package was then distributed to race organizers from the following race events:

- Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation Run for the Cure
- Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon
- Terry Fox Run
- Oasis Zoo Run
- Toronto Women's Run
- A Mid Summer Night's Run
- Toronto 10 Miler and 5k
- Jazz Run – The Beaches Warm Up

3. Distribution of Reference Card in Race Kits

The ASC contacted the above races with our electronic outreach package and received interest from both the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and the Oasis Zoo Run. Unfortunately, the ASC discovered that both of these runs were no longer producing physical race bags which would normally be distributed to race participants during registration prior to race day. Both races indicated to the ASC that they had transitioned to a Virtual Race Bag format. However, this new format would allow the ASC to reach a significantly larger number of race participants. The Virtual Race Bag represented an opportunity to reach over 30,000 race participants (25,000 for the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and 5,000 for the Oasis Zoo Run). It would not have been possible for the ASC to print a large enough quantity of the Reference Cards to have been able to participate in either of these runs had they still used a traditional race bag.

In order to meet the specification of the Virtual Race Bag (VRB), the Reference Card had to be redesigned slightly and reduced to only one-side. The VRB format allowed for the one-sided Reference Card as well as additional details which would be presented to Race Participants via email following the race. The ASC elected to use this format to highlight the ASC's AQHI website (www.asthma.ca/aqhi) which featured information about the AQHI, the 20/20 campaign and the AsthmaToday Widget. A copy of the VRB insert can be found in Appendix 4. With both of these races falling outside of the completion date of this project the ASC is unable to present the VRB report indicating the number of views and clickthroughs to the ASC AQHI website. This can be presented in a supplementary report at the request of Toronto Public Health.

4. AQHI Video

As outlined in the original proposal, the ASC produced a video featuring John Healy, a leading Team Asthma athlete and elite marathon runner. The video describes the importance of monitoring air quality through the AQHI, particularly for runners and those with chronic respiratory diseases. The video was hosted on YouTube and featured on the ASC's AQHI website (www.asthma.ca/aqhi) as well as on social media channels Facebook and Twitter. The video can be viewed by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwJQNfKgH3A>.

5. Newspaper Advertisements

The ASC investigated the purchase of newspaper advertisements as a mechanism to promote the AQHI and the 20/20 program. Unfortunately, the budget for this project did not allow for us to purchase advertisements in community or municipal newspapers or running magazines. As an alternative, the ASC drafted a news article and contacted running clubs and running clinics in an effort to have them distribute the article to their members. A copy of the letter to running clubs can be found in Appendix 5. A copy of the article can be found in Appendix 6. The running clubs contacted included:

- Running Rats
- Longboat Roadrunners
- Lululemon Athletica Downtown Run Club
- York Mills Running Room
- Toronto Beaches Runners Club
- Toronto Running Club
- XSNRG
- Frontrunners Toronto
- Toronto Penguins Running Club
- The Runners' Shop
- Greater Toronto Track Club
- York University Track and Field Club
- West Toronto Track Club

Additionally, the ASC added a slightly amended article to its AQHI website found at www.asthma.ca/aqhi.

Furthermore, the ASC purchased Facebook ads to promote the AQHI and the 20/20 campaign by directing people to the John Healy AQHI video. The ads were targeted to an audience of 98,080 Facebook users who lived within 25 miles of Toronto, Ontario, were aged 18 and older and who liked any of the following terms: #Inhaler, #Outdoor recreation, #Wheeze, #Walking, #Sprint (running), #Air quality, #Ironman 70.3, #Asthma, #Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, #Air pollution, ironman, track field, #Triathlon, #Asthma and Allergy Friendly, #Running, #Cycling, #Marathon, #Asthma Society of Canada, #Cross country running, #Road running, #Middle distance running, #Half marathon or who were in the category Health & Wellbeing or the category Outdoor Fitness Activities.

The ad reached 60,487 people or 61.7% of the target audience which included 3,575,488 impressions and 224 people clicking the link through to the AQHI video.

6. National Asthma Patient Alliance

NAPA, the National Asthma Patient Alliance, is the patient advocacy group supported by the Asthma Society of Canada. With approximately **600** active NAPA members in the Greater Toronto area, **1300** active members nationwide, and over **3600** informational members across the country, this group of self-subscribed asthma individuals receives our monthly newsletter and

breaking news e-mail alerts (known as NAPAlerts). NAPA members regularly received updates on asthma issues, including air quality and the AQHI, through social media channels Facebook and Twitter.

7. Asthma Ambassadors

The Asthma Ambassadors program includes peer-to-peer education and support for overall chronic disease management. The program trains interested members in delivering main asthma messages by conducting educational events and participating in community fairs in their respective communities. The ASC currently has trained **28** Asthma Ambassadors located in the Greater Toronto Area. To help deliver appropriate messaging and materials, the ASC has train-the-trainer kits and educational kits that are distributed by Asthma Ambassadors to people with asthma from their existing networks as well as to various places of contact in their respective communities, such as: schools, pharmacies, doctor's offices, community associations, etc. The kits contain a variety of materials addressing Asthma control and management as well as information about the AQHI and the 20/20 program along with references to environmentally friendly programs available in the province of Ontario. Between April and August 2012, the ASC distributed **25** train-the-trainer and educational kits in the Greater Toronto Area.

8. Team Asthma

The Team Asthma program was created in 2011 to work with individuals with asthma, or people who have a connection to asthma, to promote the importance of physical activity and regular exercise to people with asthma. Team Asthma members make a commitment to lead healthy and active lives and are dedicated to demonstrating that asthma cannot stop people from reaching their goals. Members represent the ASC at organized races across the country raising money, distributing educational information and promoting the Team Asthma program. ASC presently has **44** Team Asthma Members in the Greater Toronto Area, **10** of which are registered to participate in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on October 14, 2012. Upon registration, Team Asthma members receive a free technical t-shirt as well as an educational kit including information on the AQHI and the 20/20 program.

9. Social Media Presence

The ASC utilizes a Twitter account and a Facebook account for communication with individuals through social media. Both of these networks are regularly updated by the ASC staff to provide the most up-to-date information on asthma, associated allergies, and air quality.

Between April and August 2012 the ASC released 21 'tweets' through Twitter and 'posts' on Facebook relating to air quality and the AQHI. (see Appendix 7).

The ASC has **3657** Twitter followers who received these messages; however, since Twitter users are not organized by location, it is unclear how many of the ASC's Twitter followers reside in Toronto and the GTA.

The ASC Facebook page has **1371** 'likes', and consequently receive updates in their news feed with new postings made by the ASC regarding air quality and the AQHI. Just like Twitter, Facebook users are generally not organized by location.

10. Asthma Society Websites

The ASC features multiple websites which are used to promote Air Quality, the AQHI and the 20/20 Campaign.

In addition to our main website (www.asthma.ca), the ASC operates a specific AQHI website linked from our main website. This website contains the resources developed through previous projects with Toronto Public Health, Health Canada and Environment Canada as well as features new resources developed through this project. (see Appendix 8) Between April and August 2012 the AQHI website (www.asthma.ca/aqhi) received **853** unique page views.

We also maintain the AsthmaToday Desktop Widget webpage. The Widget provides web users with asthma news and updates from the ASC as well as location specific weather forecasts, humidity readings and AQHI levels. The Widget can be downloaded to any computer or laptop to gain instant access to this data and information. Between April and August 2012 the AsthmaToday Widget website (www.asthma.ca/widget) received **925** unique page views.

11. Asthma and Allergy Education and Support program

Previously known as the Asthma Help Line, this service provides over the phone and e-mail education and counseling for those who call our toll free phone number or e-mail the ASC asking for information about their condition. It is staffed by Certified Asthma Educators/Certified Respiratory Educators (CAEs/CREs) who provide over the phone or e-mail interactive support and education. Based on area code phone number identification (416, 647, 905 or 289), our CAEs/CREs deliver AQHI and 20/20 campaign information when they are answering inquires from individuals residing in the GTA. They have been given a "starting script" based off the AQHI DVD Toolkit material "Long Toronto AQHI Article" and are trained with the program information in case there are any direct questions about either program. This information has been delivered since August 17th 2010. During the project period, our CAEs/CREs delivered AQHI and 20/20 messaging to **76** people by phone and **70** people by e-mail.

12. Distribution of Printed Materials

The ASC regularly distributed package of educational materials to individuals and healthcare and community organizations such as hospitals, Asthma Clinics, physician offices, pharmacies and schools. During the duration of this project the ASC distributed **107** packages in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area which contained information on the AQHI, the 20/20 campaign and the AsthmaToday Widget.

13. Health Fairs and Information Sessions

The Asthma Society is often asked to staff a booth at a health fair or related event. Between April and August the ASC was present at events at which information on the AQHI and 20/20 Campaign as well as the AsthmaToday Widget postcards were distributed. We attended **2** events in the GTA over this time period. These events were:

- Bell Canada Health Fair – May 9 & May 11
- Respiratory health workshop at Eva's Phoenix – July 24

The Bell Canada Health Fair was staffed by a NAPA Executive Committee member. The respiratory health workshop at Eva's phoenix was conducted by a Certified Asthma Educator.

14. Media Presence

We have promoted the AQHI and the 20/20 Campaign in the following media outlets targeting in Toronto and the GTA :

Television:

- May 9, 2012 Weather Channel – Segment features ASC President & C.E.O. Dr. Robert Oliphant discussing asthma, allergies and air quality. Segment appeared on the Weather Channel television and appears in their regular loop. Video is also available online at: <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/undertheweather/gallery/826/7343270/1/collection>
- June 11, 2012 Global News Toronto – segment features ASC President & C.E.O. Dr. Robert Oliphant discussing smog days and asthma. The segment was featured on the Toronto evening news and is also available on their website at: <http://www.globaltoronto.com/smog+advisory+remains+in+effect+for+toronto/6442658249/story.html>
- June 12, 2012 Sun News – segment features ASC President & C.E.O. Dr. Robert Oliphant discussing smog days and asthma. The segment was featured on Sun TV news, in Sun newspapers across the country as well as being available online at: <http://www.torontosun.com/2012/06/23/living-with-asthma-in-smogtown>

- June 20, 2012 Global National – segment features NAPA Executive Committee member Debbie Valentini discussing smog days, asthma and the AQHI and aired on Global National News.

Newspaper:

- See above June 12, 2012 news story from Sun News.

Online:

- See above for details of online news stories from June 11, 2012 and June 12, 2012

IV. Project Evaluation

The project proposal outlined a variety of mechanisms intended to be used for overall project evaluation relating to the distribution of the Reference Cards into physical race kits. Unfortunately, as many of the races recently decided to replace the physical kits with the Virtual Race Bag this model had to be adjusted. As a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the Reference Card, the ASC distributed the new resource to its network of Certified Asthma/Respiratory Educators, NAPA Executive Committee Members, and ASC Staff. These individuals reviewed the materials and completed an online survey indicating the areas where they thought the Reference Card succeeded in accomplishing its objectives and areas where they felt the reference card needed improvement. Some of the results from this survey can be found above in section II, 1. Following the feedback we received, the Reference Card was significantly adjusted to better meet the original project objectives.

Additionally, the ASC proposed the following indicators be used to measure the success of this project. The project results are listed for each item.

- Number of race events and organizers who were contacted, received AQHI and 20/20 materials, and distributed them to race participants
 - 8 races contacted
 - 2 races agreed to receive materials
 - 30,000 race participants to receive materials through Virtual Race Bags
- Number of media outlets contacted and agreed to distribute AQHI and 20/20 articles as well as their average audience reach
 - 13 running clubs contacted
 - Facebook ads reached over 60,000 people with over 3.5 million impressions
- Number of new Asthma Ambassadors, Team Asthma Members and NAPA members recruited to promote the AQHI and 20/20 campaign
 - 47 new NAPA members
 - 3 new Asthma Ambassadors
 - 12 new Team Asthma Members
- Number of AQHI and 20/20 materials distributed by Asthma Ambassadors and Team Asthma members

- 25 train-the-trainer and asthma education kits sent to Asthma Ambassadors and Team Asthma members
- Number of reference cards sent out to individuals and community centres in Toronto during the project
 - Reference Cards, through the Virtual Race Bags, will be distributed to 30,000 race participants
- Number of new ASC customers who received information on the AQHI and 20/20 campaign through ongoing outreach activities
 - 853 unique page views for ASC's AQHI website
 - 925 unique page views for ASC's AsthmaToday Widget website
 - 146 individuals provided with information through the Asthma and Allergy Education and Support Program
 - 107 packages of materials, including AQHI and 20/20 campaign materials distributed to hospitals, physician's offices, asthma clinics, etc.
 - Approximately 100 people received materials and information through health fairs and workshops
 - Unknown number of individuals reached through media presence
- Number of social networking users reached by providing information related to AQHI and 20/20 campaign
 - 21 related Tweets or Facebook Posts
 - 3657 followers on Twitter
 - 1371 'likes' on Facebook
 - 92 views of the John Healy AQHI video
 - 60,487 people reached by Facebook advertisements, including 3,575,488 impressions

V. Conclusions

The ASC was able to achieve the main goal of the project by increasing the number of individuals receiving information on the AQHI and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign by targeting organized running events in Toronto. While we experienced difficulty in executing the project plan as originally outlined, the ASC successfully amended the project activities in order to maximize the exposure of the AQHI and the 20/20 campaign. These successes were highlighted through the distribution of the new digital Reference Card through the Virtual Race Bag to over 30,000 race participants in the Oasis Zoo Run and the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. This far exceeded the outlined minimum goal of reaching 500 people.

Additionally, the ASC was able to successfully outreach to individuals through its online AQHI video, social media campaign and Facebook advertising. In particular the Facebook ads were able to reach over 60,000 people and were viewed over 3.5 million times, a reach that would have far exceeded any exposure available in traditional print media advertising at a fraction of the cost.

Utilizing existing ASC and NAPA programs allowed further dissemination of AQHI and 20/20 campaign materials. This was accomplished through Asthma Ambassadors and Team Asthma members, and through the ASC's regular distribution of materials to physicians, hospitals, asthma clinics etc. as well as through the Asthma and Allergy Education and Support Program.

Finally, while in the end this project did not physically produce copies of the Reference Card, the new design is available for any future use should the need arise.

The metrics outlined in the Project Evaluation clearly demonstrate that the ASC was successful in meeting all of the outlined goals through its modified project activities.

VI. Appendices

Appendix 1 – AQHI Reference Card Side 1




Asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada

 **TORONTO** Public Health

Printed through the support of Toronto Public Health
and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign

Having a bad air day? Don't let it slow you down!

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is an online tool that helps those with asthma identify when the air quality is at a safe level to participate in outdoor activities. High AQHI readings (7-10) can cause increased asthma symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and the need for increased inhaler use.

As a runner, you face a particular challenge. During exercise, you breathe deeper and faster, which leads to more air pollution entering your lungs. This can trigger asthma symptoms.

Air Quality Health Index

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
Risk: Low (1-3)			Moderate (4-6)			High (7-10)		Very High (Above 10)		

Plan your outdoor activities by checking the AQHI to minimize health risks – it's as easy as checking the weather! To check the AQHI, simply download the AsthmaToday Widget to your computer at asthma.ca/widget.

AQHI Reference Card - Side 2

TEAM
Asthma.ca[™]



Team Asthma is a community of Canadians who have asthma, or a connection to asthma. We are leading active, healthy lives and are proving that asthma cannot stop us from reaching our goals.

Team Asthma members are active in running, walking, triathlons, fitness classes, hiking, paddling, hockey, skiing and so much more!

Active Team Asthma members also play a crucial role in helping to raise awareness and money toward asthma treatment. We do this by participating in organized races across Canada such as 5k, 10k, half marathons and marathons!

Join Team Asthma today to receive your free Team Asthma technical t-shirt at www.asthma.ca/teamasthma

Appendix 2 – AQHI Sticker



AIR QUALITY HEALTH INDEX

The Air Quality Health Index will help you and your family make the right decisions when planning outdoor activities – it's as easy as checking the weather! To check the AQHI download the AsthmaToday Widget to your computer at asthma.ca/widget.

RISK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
	LOW (1 - 3)			MODERATE (4 - 6)			HIGH (7 - 10)			VERY HIGH (10 & ABOVE)	
AT RISK POPULATION: <i>(people with heart or breathing problems)</i>	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.			Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you are experiencing symptoms.			Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities outdoors. Children and the elderly should also take it easy.			Avoid strenuous activities outdoors, particularly for children and the elderly.	
GENERAL POPULATION: 	Ideal air quality for outdoor activities.			No need to modify your usual outdoor activities unless you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.			Consider reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities outdoors if you experience symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.			Reduce activities outdoors, especially if you are experiencing symptoms such as coughing and throat irritation.	

The AQHI is an initiative between Environment Canada and Health Canada.

www.asthma.ca

Appendix 3 – Letter to Race Organizers

Dear Race Organizer,

The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) is committed to helping asthma patients breathe more easily, and therefore recognizes the vital importance of clean air and a healthy environment.

As you know, running is most enjoyable and rewarding when we are able to do it in a comfort. That is why we believe it is important to promote clean air, and to understand as runners, which days, based on the Air Quality Health Index are better to run than others.

This year, we are partnering with Toronto Public Health for the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air campaign designed to help individuals reduce both home energy use and vehicle use by 20%. We are also prompting the Air Quality Health Index with this campaign. The AQHI incorporates the most recent scientific information on the health effects of key air pollutants – ground level ozone, particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. It measures local air pollution and reports the health risk on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the lowest risk to health.

We would like to promote the 20/20 campaign and the AQHI with those active in outdoor activities such as running. We have created materials that we would like to include free in your upcoming race kit. These materials include information about the 20/20 campaign and AQHI that help educate runners on the importance of clean air when being active.

Attached are copies of the mentioned materials.

Please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing back from you and having the chance to work together.

Sincerely,

Keith Torrie

Team Asthma Coordinator
Asthma Society of Canada

Appendix 4 – Copy of Virtual Race Bag Insert



Asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada

Asthma Society of Canada

Plan your next run using the FREE AsthmaToday Widget.





Asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada

Toronto Public Health

Printed through the support of Toronto Public Health and the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air Campaign

Having a bad air day? Don't let it slow you down!

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is an online tool that helps those with asthma identify when the air quality is at a safe level to participate in outdoor activities. High AQHI readings (7-10) can cause increased asthma symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and the need for increased inhaler use.

As an athlete, you face a particular challenge. During exercise, you breathe deeper and faster, which leads to more air pollution entering your lungs. This can trigger asthma symptoms.

Air Quality Health Index

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
Risk: Low (1-3)			Moderate (4-6)			High (7-10)		Very High (Above 10)		

Plan your outdoor activities by checking the AQHI to minimize health risks – it's as easy as checking the weather! To check the AQHI, simply download the AsthmaToday Widget to your computer at asthma.ca/widget.

Click below to download your FREE AsthmaToday Widget which runs on your computer and provides you with your local Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reading, humidity levels, current weather and upcoming forecast.

+ LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more? Click these links.

 Like  1.3k 

Appendix 5 – Letter to Running Clubs

Dear Running Club!

This summer the Asthma Society of Canada is partnering with Toronto Public Health for the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air campaign designed to help individuals reduce both home energy use and vehicle use by 20%. We are promoting the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) with this campaign. The AQHI incorporates the most recent scientific information on the health effects of key air pollutants – ground level ozone, particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. It measures local air pollution and reports the health risk on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the lowest risk to health.

We are using this campaign to reach out to those who are physically active, such as runners, to educate them about the importance of clean air and the AQHI. We are contacting running clubs across Toronto to ask if they would be willing to share information of campaign with their members.

Attached is a sample article for you to copy and paste into your newsletter as well as a link to our AQHI website which features helpful tools, information and videos.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

We really appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Asthma Society of Canada

Appendix 6 – AQHI News Article

Hey runners!

Are you using the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) to determine the best time to be active outdoors? If you're not, you should!

The AQHI incorporates the most recent scientific information on the health effects of key air pollutants – ground level ozone, particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide. It measures local air pollution and reports the health risk on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the lowest risk to health.

A reading of the AQHI assesses the air pollution level and you can adjust your outdoor activities if necessary, based on your individual health risk to air pollution. For those affected by asthma, the AQHI can be a very useful tool in helping to manage symptoms while living an active lifestyle.

Along with encouraging the use of AQHI, the Asthma Society of Canada and Toronto Public Health are promoting the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air campaign designed to help individuals reduce both home energy use and vehicle use by 20%. Helping to reduce energy and vehicle use can contribute cleaner more enjoyable air.

To find out more information, check out the link below
<http://www.asthma.ca/global/aqhi.php>

Appendix 7 – Social Media Campaign (Facebook and Twitter)

April 11 - Environment Canada offers a comprehensive air quality health index tool you can use to determine what conditions are like in your area. This can help you better plan your day's activities, which can be very helpful to asthma patients, the elderly, and those with young children. Here's today's quality index for Toronto, Ontario
http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/airquality/pages/onaq-001_e.html

April 16 - [#ClimateChange](#) contributing to [#asthma](#) cases? [#AQHI](#) <http://t.co/VeA9awCe>

April 17 - American lung doctors are warning that climate change and an increase in the global temperature will result in rising incidences of lung diseases including asthma. What better reason to consult your Air Quality Health Index on hot or smoggy days?
<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/03/15/doctors-warn-climate-change-may-lead-to-spike-in-asthma-cases>

April 27 - The updated AsthmaToday Widget runs on your computer and provides you with your current weather and upcoming forecast, humidity levels, and now provides you with your local Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) reading. The Widget also provides the latest asthma news and helpful links from the Asthma Society. This is a great resource for anyone living with asthma, especially in urban areas where air quality is a daily concern. Download the widget today!
<http://www.asthma.ca/widget/>

May 7 - Team Asthma member and elite athlete John Healy discusses how he uses the Air Quality Health Index to manage his asthma symptoms while maintaining an aggressive training regimen and regularly competing in marathons and triathlons.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnCzJ2obcg0&feature=youtu.be>

May 16 - Managing [#asthma](#) symptoms using the [#AQHI](#): <http://t.co/rJsKhc3c>

May 19 - Asthma Society of Canada President & CEO [Rob Oliphant](#) discusses how he uses the Air Quality Health Index to manage his asthma symptoms when engaging in outdoor activity.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naeo9iuP5KQ&feature=youtu.be>

June 5 - We should all pay attention to smog advisories issued by [Environment Canada](#), but it is of special importance to those of us living with asthma - smoggy days can make symptoms worse and increase the potential for an attack. Keep a close eye on Environment Canada's advisories and be prepared for whatever the weather throws your way!
http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/warnings/sws_e.html

June 10 - Are you aware of the Air Quality Health Index for your area? If not, you should be - while it's of particular importance for those living with asthma, it's useful information for us all!
<http://www.asthma.ca/global/aqhi.php>

June 11 - [#Smog](#) advisory for Toronto. Watch [@asthmasociety](#) President [@rob_oliphant](#) discuss the [#AQHI](#) on Global News today @ 5:30 <http://t.co/ZD47zKKF>

June 12 - Watch ASC President & CEO [@rob_oliphant](#) on [@globaltvnews](#) talk about [#smog](#) and the [#AQHI](#): <http://t.co/TRjtU8Mf>

June 15 - [#AQHI](#) arrives in Fort Saskatchewan! <http://t.co/snBRSj2O>

June 14 – RT [@HealthCanada](#) Reminds Canadians To be “Air Aware” - Check the [#AirQualityHealthIndex](#) Before Going Outside this Summer<http://bit.ly/NBsSdn>

June 20 – RT [@HealthCanada](#): If you suffer from [#asthma](#), protect your health and check the [#AirQualityHealthIndex](#) before heading outside <http://www.airhealth.ca>

July 4 - Download the [#AsthmaToday](#) widget and get all the weather information you need to plan your day! <http://www.asthma.ca/widget/>

July 4 – RT [@HealthCanada](#): The [#AirQualityHealthIndex](#) provides important information about outdoor air quality in your area. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/Ox1sHj>

July 21 - Leading active, healthy lives every day! <http://www.asthma.ca/teamasthma/>

July 25 - An interesting expose on living in a smoggy city with asthma. <http://www.torontosun.com/2012/06/23/living-with-asthma-in-smogtown>

July 30 - Smoke from northwestern [Alberta](#) wildfires has put Edmonton in a choke hold of severe AQHI ratings, making it dangerous for everyone, but especially those with respiratory challenges. <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/alberta/Wildfire+smoke+puts+chokehold+Edmonton/6935456/story.html>

August 13 - Know the climate, control your symptoms. [#AQHI](#) <http://www.asthma.ca/global/aqhi.php>

August 30 - The Air Quality Health Index is important to anyone living with asthma, but it's of special interest to athletes and active people who enjoy their time outdoors. Professional athlete John Healy talks about how the AQHI influences his training regimen: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwJONfKgH3A&feature=plcp>

Appendix 8 – Copy of ASC’s AQHI website found at www.asthma.ca/aqhi

Asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada

National Asthma Patient Alliance JOIN NOW | 1-866-787-4050 ASTHMA & ALLERGY SUPPORT LINE | Donate Now!

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Home Kids Allergy NAPA Websites Partners About Us Search our site GO

About Asthma
Treatment
Taking Control
Lifestyle
Resources & Support

Air Quality Health Index

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	+
Risk: Low (1-3)			Moderate (4-6)			High (7-10)			Very High (Above 10)	

Check the AQHI in Your Area!
Click Here >>

[AQHI Main Page >>](#)

[Background Information >>](#)

[About the AQHI >>](#)

[AQHI Health Messages >>](#)

空氣質素 健康指數
[AQHI Information Available in Chinese >>](#)

Purpose

The purpose of this webpage is to assess your awareness of the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), your preference in receiving the AQHI information, and your willingness to use the AQHI forecast. We would also like to understand whether the AQHI information will encourage you to make environmentally conscience lifestyle choices.

The Air Quality Health Index and Asthma Digital Stories

Air Quality Health Index

Having a Bad Air Day? Don't Let it Slow you Down

The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is an online tool that helps those with asthma identify when the air quality is at a safe level to participate in outdoor activities. High AQHI readings (7-10) can cause increased asthma symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and the need for increased inhaler use.

As a runner, you face a particular challenge. During exercise, you breathe deeper and faster, which leads to more air pollution entering your lungs. This can trigger asthma symptoms. Join Team Asthma to be a part of our community of people with asthma, or people with a connect to asthma who are leading healthy active lives. asthma.ca/teamasthma.

Plan your outdoor activities by checking the AQHI to minimize health risks - it's as easy as checking the weather! To check the AQHI, simply download the AsthmaToday Widget to your computer at asthma.ca/widget or visit airhealth.ca

Download the AsthmaToday Widget!

Download the AsthmaToday Widget to your computer or laptop and gain instant access to the AQHI and news surrounding asthma and associated allergies.

[AsthmaToday Widget >>](#)

AQHI Poll

1) Are you aware of the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)?
 Yes No

2) What is your preferred communication method of receiving the AQHI information? Please check all that apply.

VII. References

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