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Asthma Canada

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ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

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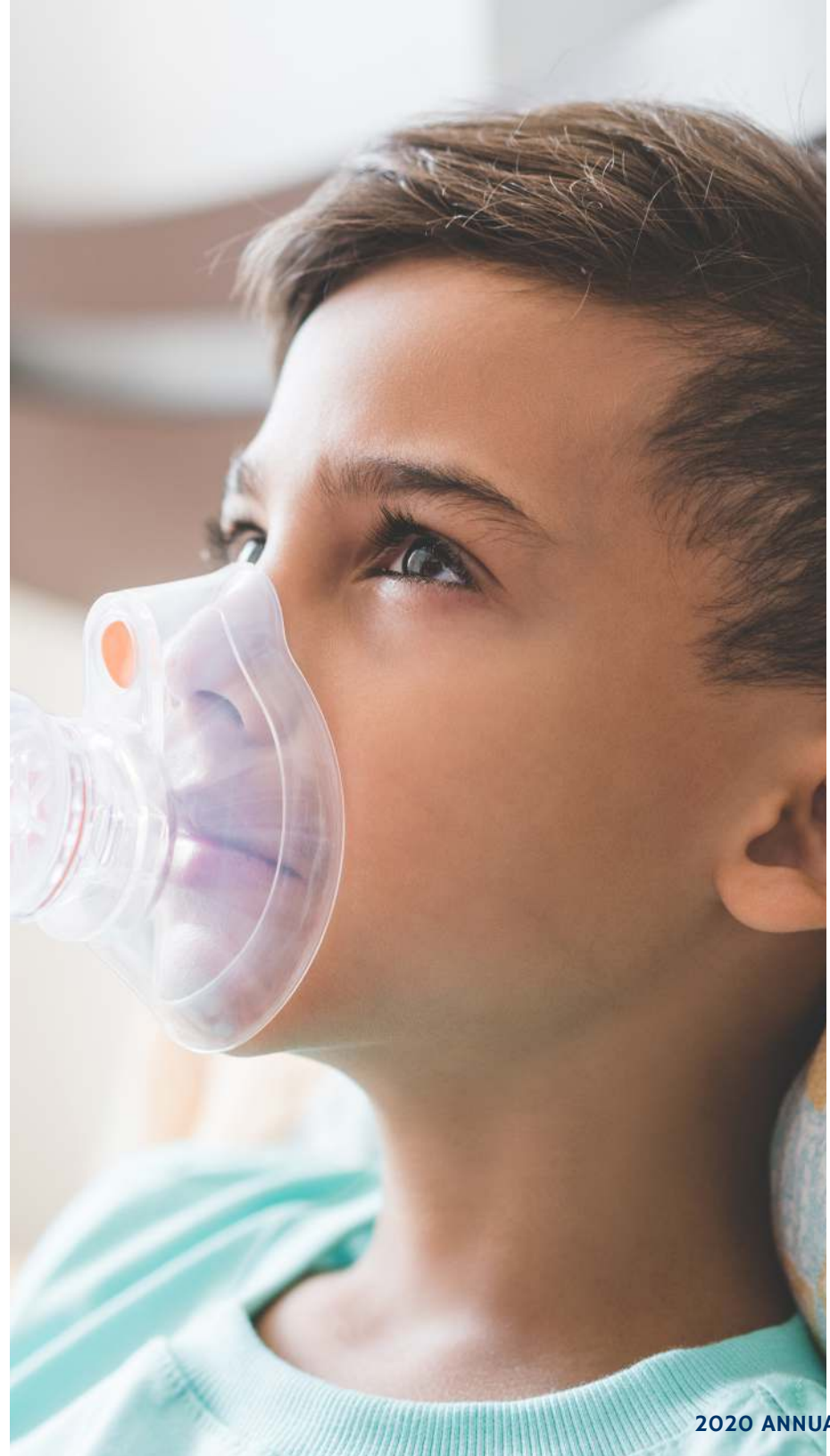
Fighting For All Canadians With Asthma

Every day 317 Canadians are newly diagnosed with asthma. With your support, we help Canadians living with asthma better manage their condition through education, unlock new understandings through research, and advocate for positive change to improve quality of life for our community.

Asthma Canada is the only national charity solely devoted to improving the lives of Canadians living with asthma and respiratory allergies. For 47 years, we have proudly served as the voice of all Canadians affected by this chronic disease.

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



CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA

More than 850,000 children under the age of 14 have asthma, making it the most common chronic disease among children and the leading cause for both school absenteeism and hospitalization.



DIAGNOSIS

An estimated 317 Canadians are diagnosed with asthma every single day.



THE HUMAN TOLL

An estimated 250 Canadians lose their lives to asthma each year. That means 4 to 5 Canadian families lose a loved one to asthma each week. With proper asthma education, many of these deaths can be prevented.

UNEQUAL BURDEN



Some Canadians are hit harder by asthma; it is 40% more prevalent among First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities than the general Canadian population.



ASTHMA PREVALENCE

Across Canada, asthma affects the lives of more than 3.8 million Canadians, and is the third most common chronic disease.



ASTHMA ATTACKS

Asthma attacks lead to approximately 70,000+ hospitalizations annually.



DID YOU KNOW?



The age-standardized prevalence of asthma in Ontario is the highest in Canada at 12.08%.

SEVERE ASTHMA

Severe Asthma is a greater risk to health than more easily controlled types of asthma and affects an estimated 150,000-250,000 Canadians.



Joint Statement From CEO & Chair

The global pandemic made 2020 a year of both change and challenge. COVID-19 reshaped life for all of us collectively, but especially had an impact in the lives of Canadians with chronic lung conditions. Amidst all of this uncertainty, we are proud to say that Asthma Canada was able to rise to the challenge and support our community when they needed it most.

Education is a pillar of our mission and it has never been more vital. More Canadians with asthma turned to our educational programs and services for help than ever before – at its peak, our Asthma & Allergy HelpLine service experienced more than 8x the usual volume of inquiries from community members struggling to manage their asthma.

Throughout the year, we continuously updated our information on managing asthma during the pandemic based on the latest evidence, and strengthened our core programs with the addition of new and updated educational campaigns aimed at increasing asthma control among our community – including around the importance of vaccination.

We also advanced a number of key advocacy initiatives in 2020, including topics of clean air/energy and access to medications for all Canadians. We were actively involved in working to ensure that the asthma community would be a priority in national vaccine rollouts.

Supporting innovative research remained a key priority, and we were able to provide grants for research into both early-onset and late-onset asthma through our National Research Program. By investing in Canadian asthma research, we step closer to making our vision of a future without asthma a reality.



This past year also marked the conclusion of our first strategic plan. In 2018, we set out to strengthen our connections with the asthma community, expand the focus on asthma in Canada, increase funds to support our mission and build organizational capacity, and have had successes on each front. Reflecting on how far we have come in such a short time fills us with hope for what the future will bring for our organization and the amazing community we serve.

Asthma Canada is so grateful to all of our donors and supporters who made it possible for us to navigate the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic and meet the needs of our community. Thank you for standing with us even in the most uncertain times. Looking to the future, with your support there is truly no limit to what we can achieve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "V Foran".

Vanessa Foran
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vibhas Bapat".

Vibhas Bapat
Chair

Thelma's Story

Severe Asthma is a more life threatening form of asthma - you can think about it as the difference between a headache and a migraine in terms of severity.

Canadians living with Severe Asthma face a greater burden from their disease and often have a much more difficult time controlling their symptoms.

The realities of living with Severe Asthma are all too familiar to Thelma. Thelma and both of her sons, Reece and Riley, all live with Severe Asthma.

Reece and Riley were diagnosed with Severe Asthma as infants. Since their diagnosis, Riley has had over 40 emergency room visits and over 20 hospitalizations. Reece has had a number of emergency room visits and three hospitalizations. The process of finding the right treatment for Reece and Riley took around 10 years – and it wasn't until they were put on a biologic therapy that their asthma became well controlled.



Thelma has been constantly concerned for both Reece and Riley's health—all while managing her own. As a mother, Thelma lives with the fear of losing someone she loves to asthma.

For Canadians living with Severe Asthma, access to timely education, affordable medications and support are crucial to staying healthy and keeping asthma well controlled. Asthma Canada remains committed to supporting families like Thelma's that are living with Severe Asthma.

Adjusting to a new normal

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it drastic changes to how our community accessed care, experienced daily life and created many new challenges for Canadians living with chronic diseases.

As we all adjusted to the new normal and shifting guidelines, the Asthma Canada team worked tirelessly to ensure that all Canadians with asthma could access support no matter the situation.



Rising to the challenge

Supporting Canadians with asthma during the pandemic was a top priority in 2020 and our team quickly shifted our focus to providing evidence-based education on asthma and COVID-19, updating our community as new information and guidance became available.

As a respiratory health charity we saw a major increase in demand for our programs and services throughout the year, but thanks to the support of our partners, donors and community we were able to deliver strong support and meet the needs of Canadians with asthma.



ASTHMA & ALLERGY HELPLINE

At the start of the pandemic our national, bilingual Asthma & Allergy Helpline service experienced a massive increase in demand. At it's peak, reaching 8x the usual volume of calls and messages and then holding steady at roughly 4X the usual volume. We added new Certified Respiratory Educators to our team to ensure timely support for our community.



ASTHMA.CA

Asthma Canada's website saw a major increase in visitors as Canadians sought guidance on staying healthy with asthma amid the pandemic. Our website had over 1 million pageviews, and our COVID-19 & Asthma webpage became one of our most visited pages.



WEBINARS

We adjusted our lineup of educational Speaker Series Webinars with the addition of a COVID-19 and Asthma webinar presented by Dr. Alan Kaplan in March, addressing key questions from our community and providing actionable tips and information to stay healthy. Our COVID-19 related webinar was our most attended to date.



VACCINES

Vaccination is a routine part of asthma management. As part of our Lung Vaccination Working Group we launched vaccine awareness campaigns and worked on advocacy and education regarding vaccine access and hesitancy.



EDUCATION UPDATES

Throughout the pandemic, we worked with our Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee to provide updated guidance on COVID-19 and asthma. With advice changing frequently as new information became available it was paramount that we kept our community informed to best manage their asthma.



SEPTEMBER PEAK

The 2020, back to school season presented new challenges for parents, caregivers and children. Asthma Canada provided new educational content on the September Asthma Peak, and guidance on a safe return to classrooms for children with asthma.



MASKS

Mask wearing became an essential aspect of life in the pandemic, and we worked to ensure that Canadians with asthma understood the importance of mask wearing and could take part, releasing a position statement and an article with tips on wearing a mask if you have asthma.



DRUG SHORTAGES

Early in the pandemic there were some instances of drug shortages that created a concern around access to inhalers. Asthma Canada monitored the situation and shared insights with our community as information became available to ensure everyone could access their medications.

Stopping Asthma Attacks And Saving Lives



Education

Supporting the Canadian asthma community through evidence-based resources and support programs to empower patients to take control of their asthma and live symptom-free lives.

Evidence-Based Resources

The primary way that Asthma Canada supports our patient community is through evidence-based education and resources.

In 2020, Asthma Canada distributed our resources by request to patients and caregivers both in print and online, as well as to our national network of asthma clinics.



Educational materials like our Breathe Easy Booklet Series and Asthma Action Plans are freely available to all Canadians and play an instrumental role in helping patients learn about and control their asthma.

[You can browse our library of educational resources and download your own copies by clicking here.](#)

Asthma & Allergy HelpLine

Our national, bilingual Asthma and Allergy HelpLine remained vitally important to our community in 2020. During the first months of the pandemic, our HelpLine inquiries were considerably elevated with more than eight times the normal call and email volume. Our Certified Respiratory Educators worked tirelessly throughout the year to keep our community informed with personalized and expert advice.

Our HelpLine follow-up survey indicated that an overwhelming majority of our community felt that the evidence-based support they received was extremely satisfactory and that they would recommend the service to a friend or family member.



Speaker Series Webinars

Our webinar series continues to connect our community members to asthma experts to learn about new research, best practices and general education necessary to make informed choices about their health and managing their asthma.

In 2020, we hosted a four part Severe Asthma Charter Series of webinars, based on our Severe Asthma Patient Charter resource. The Charter has six guiding principles that define what people with Severe Asthma should expect for the management of their disease and what constitutes a basic standard of care.

The webinar series was our most attended to date, and provided expert information on living with, and properly managing, Severe Asthma.

In March 2020, we also conducted a bonus webinar to present an overview of how the pandemic might affect Canadians with asthma and how to best manage the disease. This COVID-19 & Asthma webinar was our most attended of the year.

[You can browse Asthma Canada's webinar library here.](#)

Asthma Red Flags Campaign

In 2020, Asthma Canada continued our Red & Yellow Flags education campaign, adding content and videos throughout the year. This campaign is focused on helping people with asthma recognize the signs of uncontrolled or Severe Asthma and when to ask for specialist help.

[Download our Red & Yellow Flags Checklist](#)



Break Over-reliance Campaign

The Break Over-Reliance campaign was a new initiative we launched in 2020. The campaign aimed to address blue reliever inhaler overuse, which is one of the most serious signs of uncontrolled asthma.

The campaign included cross-Canada promotion, and a digital rate your reliance test that patients can use to find out if they are overly reliant on their rescue inhaler.

[Take The Rate Your Reliance Test](#)

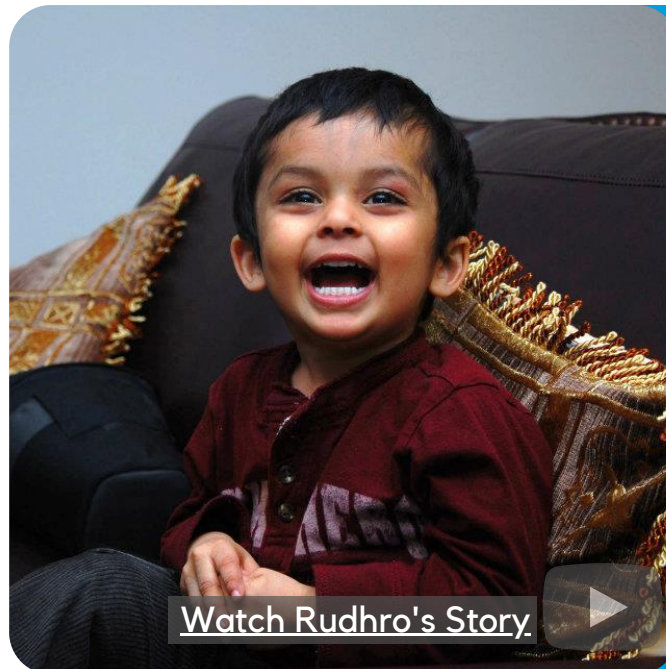


Education Updates

There are many aspects to living with asthma, especially with comorbidities. That's why we are always expanding our educational content to ensure that our community can find the latest information they need to stay healthy with asthma.

In 2020, we added new education sections to our website on the topics of nasal polyps, Severe Asthma in children, and COVID-19. We also published many educational blog articles with tips to help people with asthma control their symptoms.

We also continued to educate our community on the importance of receiving recommended vaccinations for people with lung disease through our annual influenza and pneumococcal disease vaccination awareness campaigns.



Raising Awareness

In an effort to raise awareness about the seriousness of asthma, we aired a Public Service Announcement featuring "Rudhro's Story" on the Weather Network across Canada for two weeks in September 2020.

Rudhro Prince tragically passed away from a severe asthma attack when he was only 8 years old. Now his family is working with Asthma Canada to raise asthma awareness.



Asthma Clinic Locator

As part of our website and digital overhaul in 2020, we updated our Asthma Clinic Locator tool on our website, increasing result accuracy and ease of use. This tool is helpful to both physicians and patients when seeking referral or asthma care.

Launching a new asthma.ca

Asthma Canada launched our brand new, updated website in 2020, making asthma education more accessible than ever before. The goal of the redesign was to streamline our educational content and make programs and services as easy to access as possible.

The website also includes a number of new sections like our News & Updates blog section where we post educational articles and tips throughout the year. As our most valuable educational tool, the asthma.ca website helps millions of Canadians learn about their asthma.

Asthma Canada Member Alliance

Building connections with the asthma community is vital to our mission, and the input we receive from Canadians affected by asthma informs everything that we do.

The Asthma Canada Member Alliance (ACMA) continues to be the patient arm and voice of our organization, with membership across Canada. In 2020, some of our ACMA members served in an advisory capacity with active volunteers to provide valuable insights into our programs and services and help increase asthma awareness nationally.

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

Through our connection with our ACMA members, Asthma Canada provides evidence-based information, education and engagement opportunities to people impacted by asthma living across the country.

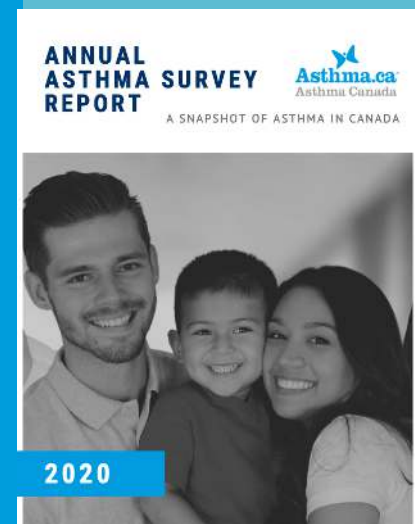


With ACMA membership comes access to Asthma Canada's e-newsletter and a variety of program to help patients better manage their symptoms and live symptom-free.

[You can join the Asthma Canada Member Alliance here.](#)

Annual Asthma Survey

When Asthma Canada began preparing to launch our 2020 survey, we had no idea what the year would have in store for us. It is safe to say that 2020 was a year unlike any other. The voices of the asthma community — including patients, parents, caregivers and healthcare providers — were especially important during the pandemic and helped us continue to meet the changing needs of our community.



2020 marked the launch of our second Annual Asthma Survey, which helped to reveal gaps in care across the country and informed our strategy as we work to ensure that no Canadian has to face asthma alone.

You can read the full 2020 Annual Asthma Survey Report by downloading the final report below.

[Read The Report](#)

Speaking Up For Canadians With Asthma



Advocacy

Raising the voice of the asthma community across the country on important issues like access to medication, clean air & energy, and vaccination.

Advocating for change

One of the main ways that Asthma Canada supports the asthma community is by advocating for positive change on issues that are important to the health and well being of all Canadians affected by asthma.

In 2020, we took action on a number of key advocacy initiatives including clean air and energy, equitable access to medications, vaccine access, and vaping.

Clean Air & Energy

Asthma Canada joined the 2020 Green Ribbon Panel, which represents a collection of environmental and economic leaders from across Canada and focuses on the role that nuclear and other representatives from the clean energy sector can play in fighting climate change and growing the economy.

The panel evaluated successful initiatives from around the world and issued a report on its findings highlighting the need for strong, innovative policies in the urgent fight to combat climate change while advancing growth opportunities for an economy challenged by the pandemic.



CADTH Patient Evidence Submission

At Asthma Canada, we feel it is imperative that Canadians living with asthma have access to multiple treatments to manage their disease, and also the ability to choose which medications work best for them.

To improve drug access for all Canadians living with asthma, we routinely submit input from the asthma community to Health Canada's drug review body, The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH).

In 2020, Asthma Canada made a patient evidence submission to CADTH to inform their consideration of a new triple-therapy medication for moderate and Severe Asthma, delivered through a Dry Powder Inhaler (DPI) delivery device, Breezehaler®.

Vaping Is Not For Kids

Asthma Canada attended a press conference in support of Ontario NDP Health Critic France Gelin's new members bill, Vaping is not for kids. The bill would require the Ministry of Health to take steps to prevent young people from accessing and using vaping products.

On Feb 3, 2020 Ontario's Minister of Health announced flavoured vaping products would be banned from convenience stores and gas stations and that they would cap nicotine levels in a bid to prevent the use of e-cigarettes among young people.

Access to Medications

Access to medications is an important issue to our organization and to the Canadians with asthma that we serve. Medications play a critical role in managing diseases, improving quality of life, preventing or reducing hospitalizations and leading to positive health outcomes.

In 2020, Asthma Canada worked with the Best Medicines Coalition and the Health Charities Coalition of Canada (HCCC) to inform the Government of Canada's work on this topic, providing consultation and stakeholder input on revisions being made to the Patented Medicine Peer Review Board (PMPRB).



World Asthma Day 2020



Asthma Canada marked this past World Asthma Day (May 5, 2020) by launching a social media awareness campaign and downloadable toolkit encouraging community members to take action by sharing their stories on social media, thanking those who help them breathe easy, and by creating World Asthma Day fundraisers to support our mission.

We were so grateful for all the community engagement and support we received during the campaign. Raising asthma awareness is key to changing the lives of Canadians struggling with asthma.



Unlocking A Future Without Asthma



Research

Supporting the next generation of leading asthma researchers to expand our understandings of asthma and bring us closer to realizing our vision of a future without asthma.

National Research Program

Asthma Canada remains dedicated to making our vision of a future without asthma a reality, and the only way to get there is by supporting innovative asthma research.

In 2020, Asthma Canada invested in asthma research through our National Research Program, supporting researchers working in the fields of both early-onset and late-onset asthma.

Our National Research Program is supported by two research funds. The Goran-Enhoring Research Fund allows us to support the work of researchers looking to make new discoveries in early-onset asthma. The Bastable-Potts Research Fund supports investigations into late-onset asthma.

Through these two research funds and the support of our donors, we are able to help unlock new understandings of this chronic disease and take us closer to a cure.

Graduate Student Research Grants

Asthma Canada is proud to support the work of emerging asthma researchers through our Graduate Student Research Grants administered in partnership with the Canadian Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF).

The goal of our Graduate Student Research Grants is to create value-added opportunities for the training, education and professional development of graduate students, to lead to new asthma discoveries that improve the lives of those living with asthma. By investing in the next generation of leading asthma researchers we ensure continued efforts in the search for new treatments and a cure.

In 2020, we awarded two \$20,000 grants to PhD level student researchers to support their innovative work into early-onset and late-onset asthma.



Unlocking a future without asthma

There is currently no cure for asthma, but by supporting Canadian asthma researchers we can help ensure a bright future free from this disease. Since 2017, Asthma Canada has supported the work of twelve PhD/MSc student researchers through our Graduate Student Research Grants and the work of six lead researchers through our Lead Investigator Awards.

Meet Our Researchers

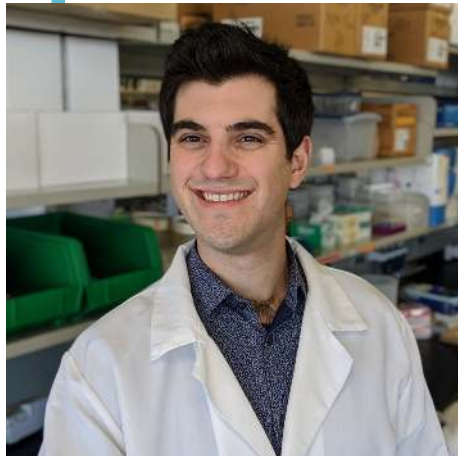


Aubrey Michi

PhD Student, University of Calgary

Aubrey Michi was the 2020 recipient of the Goran-Enhörning Graduate Student Research Award. Michi received \$20,000 from Asthma Canada and CAAIF to support her research to evaluate trained innate immunity to rhinovirus infections in highly differentiated asthmatic airway epithelial cells.

[You can read more about Michi's research here.](#)



Anthony Altieri

PhD Candidate, University of Manitoba

Anthony Altieri was the 2020 recipient of the Bastable-Potts Graduate Student Research Award. Altieri received \$20,000 from Asthma Canada and CAAIF in support of his research to identify specific drug targets that can be used to develop new treatment options and therapies, especially for severe, steroid-unresponsive asthma.

[You can read more about Altieri's research here.](#)

The Goran-Enhörning Research Fund: 5 Year Reflection

In October 2015, Asthma Canada received a generous gift on behalf of the Dr. Goran Enhörning Foundation for Pulmonary Research. This donation was instrumental in allowing Asthma Canada to support early-onset asthma research and has since made many important research studies possible.

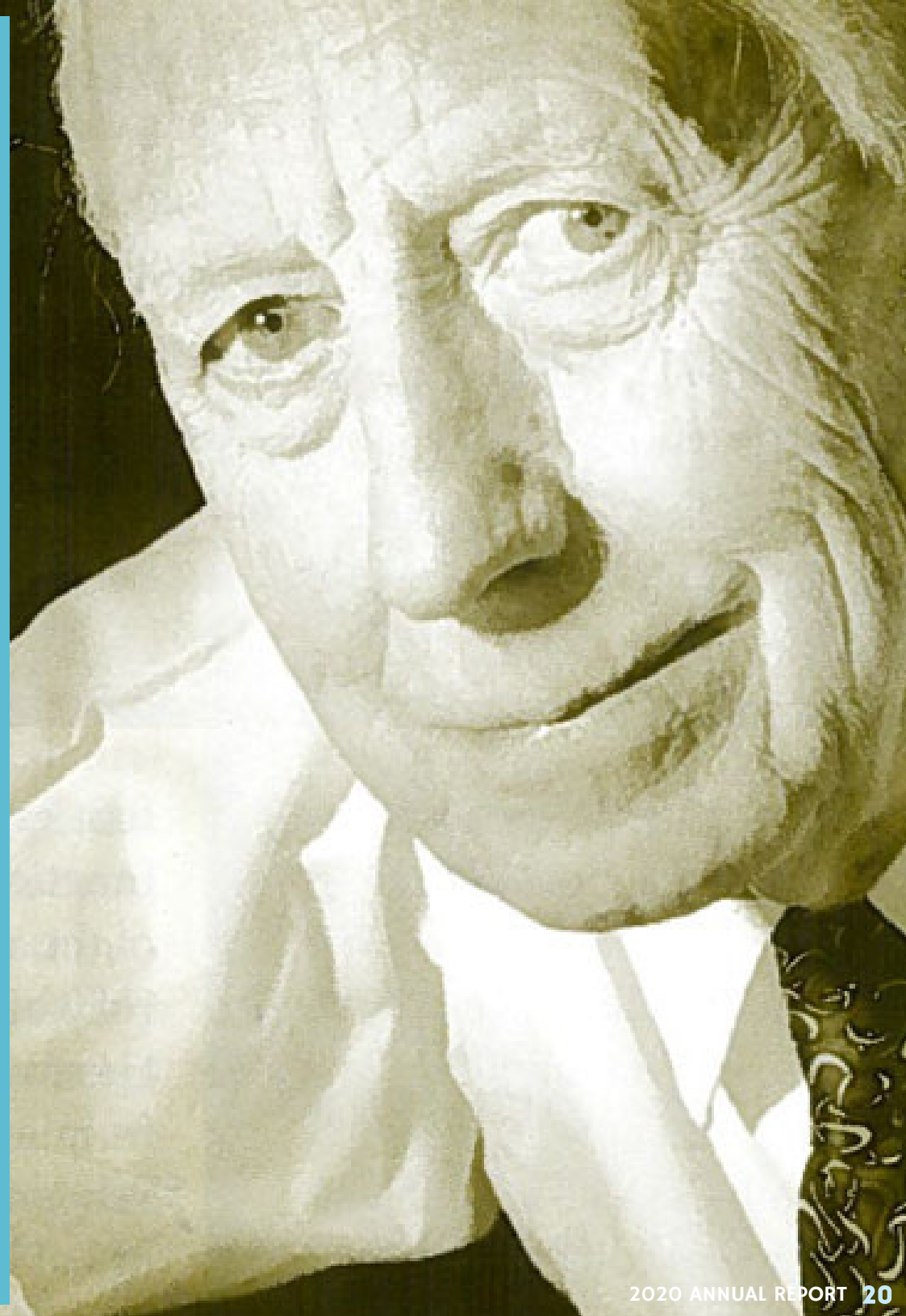
As we look back over the past five years, we want to celebrate all that the Goran-Enhörning Research Fund has allowed us to achieve and the work of the man who inspired it all.

Dr. Enhörning graduated as a medical doctor in 1952 and then spent two separate tours in Korea as a surgeon for the UN. For this he was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1954. In 1961, he completed his PhD thesis on the causes of urinary stress incontinence, which is still required reading for anyone entering this field.

Dr. Enhörning spent much of his career studying, researching and developing a treatment for Infant Respiratory Distress Syndrome (IRDS). His research has led to the development of commercial products that are now regularly used all over the world to treat IRDS. Over the past 20 years, they have helped countless premature infants breathe normally.

In 1989, he questioned whether asthma and pulmonary surfactant function were related. By 1999, he had turned his full attention to asthma. He was convinced that asthma was at least partially due to poorly functioning lung surfactant. While he conducted some experiments in this field and published a number of articles, unfortunately this work was not completed.

Dr. Enhörning was a remarkable and driven man, who was passionate about finding a cure for asthma, and Asthma Canada is honoured to be part of his legacy and continue his important work.

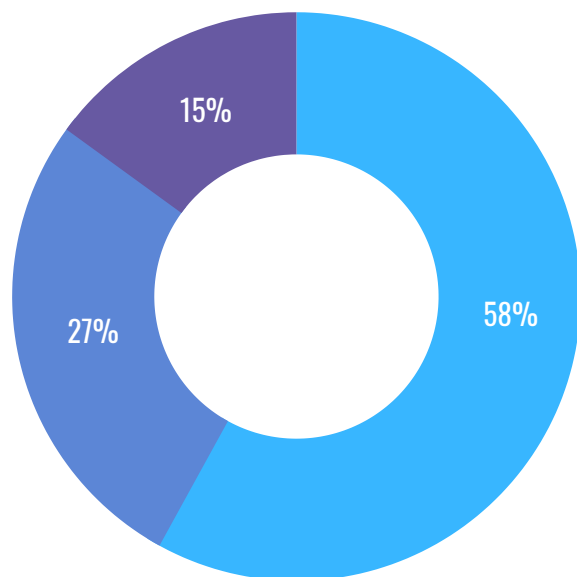
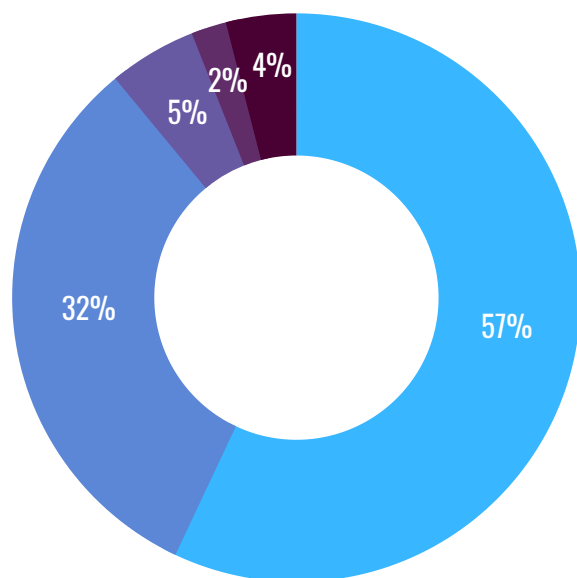




STANDING STRONG TOGETHER.

THE INCREDIBLE SUPPORT OF THE
ASTHMA COMMUNITY ALLOWS US
TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH
EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND
RESEARCH.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Sources of Revenue

Corporate & Foundation Giving	\$495,248
Individual Giving & Bequests	\$278,783
Asthma & Allergy Friendly Certification Program	\$44,993
Government of Canada	\$34,135
Investment & Other	\$21,908

How The Money Was Used

Mission Delivery (Education, Advocacy & Research)	\$396,197
Fundraising	\$184,405
Administration	\$103,518



THANK YOU!

We're so grateful for the generosity and dedicated support of our partners, donors, and community members in 2020. Thanks to all of you, we were able to deliver vital programs and services to those in need during a time of challenge.

Thank you for standing with us and believing in our mission even in the most difficult of times. Together, we are building a future without asthma.



A LEGACY OF HOPE

We believe that all Canadians deserve the right to breathe easy and are so thankful for all our donors who choose to leave a legacy gift to help create a brighter future for Canadians with asthma.

By leaving a legacy of hope, you ensure that Asthma Canada can continue providing essential asthma education to save lives, fund innovative research for better treatments and a cure, and help make our vision of a future without asthma a reality.

Legacy gifts of all amounts help Asthma Canada fight for Canadians with asthma, and make a difference through education, advocacy and research.

To learn more about legacy giving, please contact us at fundraising@asthma.ca or 1-866-787-4050 (ext.109) or visit asthma.ca/get-involved/legacy-giving_



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