

GAN World Asthma Day Press release 2016

Tuesday 3 May is World Asthma Day – the Theme is “You can control your asthma”.

Almost 1000 people die from asthma each day – far more than most people realise. The tragedy is that most of these deaths are potentially preventable.

Deaths from asthma are the tip of the iceberg of poor asthma control – asthma is a serious chronic disease, causing widespread disability and suffering at all ages. The effects on people with asthma and their families are bad enough, and the resultant loss of productivity results in huge costs to society; US\$56 billion/year in the US alone. Bringing asthma symptoms under control requires solutions at global, national, local, community, family and individual levels.

The Global Asthma Network www.globalasthmanetwork.org is poised to change this, setting bold targets to save lives, reduce suffering, lessen the burden for families which will also result in improved economies. Funded by The Union www.theunion.org, the Global Asthma Network published the Global Asthma Report 2014 www.globalasthmareport.org which sets out specific actions urgently needed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Governments, Health Authorities, and Health Practitioners.

Good long-term management can help a person with asthma to feel much better, and thus be more productive at work and home. Systematic national or local strategies have been shown to improve early detection of asthma and provide effective preventive treatment. However, quality-assured essential asthma medicines are not available to many people with asthma, yet guaranteed access to these medicines is vital to improving asthma outcomes. Unless people with asthma can get the medicines they require, they cannot control their asthma – the aim of this World Asthma Day.

“All people, with asthma have a right to access quality-assured essential asthma medicines” says Professor Innes Asher, Chair of the Global Asthma Network. *“In most countries measures can be taken to improve this access”*.

The Global Asthma Network, led by an international Steering Group, has started a new programme: Global Surveillance: Prevalence, Severity and Risk Factors involving 132 countries. In 2012 the leader of WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, said *“Accurate assessment of the global, regional and country health situation and trends is critical for evidence-based decision making in public health.... The real need is to close the data gaps”*. This is one of the goals of the Global Asthma Network.