Asthma is one of the most common chronic health conditions affecting children, and Chicago is among the most severely impacted urban areas—with asthma hospitalization rates nearly twice the national average. After UChicago Medicine's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) revealed this critical issue, the hospital formed the South Side Pediatric Asthma Center (SSPAC), a partnership of healthcare organizations including UChicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital, La Rabida Children's Hospital, Friend Health, St. Bernard Hospital, Chicago Family Health Center and Beloved Community Family Wellness Center.

SSPAC aims to reduce the burden of asthma for children and families on the South Side of Chicago and works to improve health outcomes for children with asthma byaims to reduce the burden of asthma for children and families by:

- Facilitating access to care;
- Promoting standardized asthma treatment and management;
- Educating through community engagement and outreach; and
- Deploying Community Health Workers (CHWs) to help families better understand their child's asthma. CHWs provide home visits along with education on symptoms, proper use of medication and management of asthma triggers.

According to the 2015 CHNA for UChicago Medicine, which served as the basis for the formation of the SSPAC, approximately 20% of children in the University of Chicago's service area suffer from asthma compared to 10% in Illinois and 12% nationally.

For children enrolled in SSPAC, early outcomes show positive results:

- Days needing rescue medication over a two-week period decreased from 3.34 days at baseline to 0.96 days at six-month follow-up;
- 55% reduction in asthma-related emergency department visits; and
- 47% reduction in missed school days.

For more information on SSPAC, visit southsidekidsasthma.org.

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