

The Healthy San Francisco (HSF) Asthma/COPD Program, based at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG), aims to develop innovative ways to improve the quality of asthma/COPD care delivered to vulnerable populations served by the SF safety net system.

In an effort to increase patient access to COPD self-management education and support, we launched Better Breathing in 2010. This is a four-session course for patients living with COPD and their caregivers. Taught by a multidisciplinary team of COPD experts, including NPs, RNs, RTs, and nutritionists, Better Breathing utilizes a curriculum that provides the education and skills training needed to help patients follow a COPD Action Plan. This curriculum covers disease basics, how to use inhalers correctly, breathing techniques, healthy lifestyle habits, and how to improve communication with the healthcare team. It has also served as a training resource for health care providers seeking to improve their own skills in caring for patients with COPD.

Through multiple institutional and community-based partnerships, Better Breathing has been able to increase its course offerings at ZSFG and medical homes located in SF's Tenderloin, Chinatown, and Bayview Hunters Point communities. Each of these medical homes serves unique, underserved populations that are disproportionately affected by COPD.

After several years, Better Breathing has established traction within the complex SF safety net system and now graduates approximately 50 patients, mostly with severe and advanced COPD, from the course annually. Post-course evaluations have indicated, among other measures, that patients have a high degree of self-confidence that they can use what they learned in the course to improve the quality of their lives.

Over the past year, Better Breathing has worked to expand its reach and deliver courses in Cantonese and Spanish. In addition, Better Breathing has received grant funding from the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Program and the Nina Ireland Program for Lung Health, FY 2017 Innovative Grant to initiate COPD Wellness, a program that provides education on home exercises and nutrition within a support group setting. Patients receive tools such as pedometers, pulse oximeters, and resistance bands that can support ongoing exercise in the home. This program will also study the impact of this educational intervention on relevant COPD outcomes, such as symptom scores and exercise capacity.

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