



**"Fighting for Breath" during the 3rd Annual
World Asthma Day Conference**
*Conference to focus on the social, financial and health outcomes of
patients with Severe Asthma*

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO - The Asthma Society of Canada is holding its third World Asthma Day Conference, Fighting for Breath, May 6th and 7th in Toronto bringing together healthcare professionals, patients, policymakers, stakeholders and industry to examine the complex health, social and economic issues related to Severe Asthma. Research in Severe Asthma, new treatment options and the patient experience will be presented. Disease prevention and management issues, including environmental considerations will also be discussed.

Today is World Asthma Day, and this year's global theme is 'you can control your asthma'. Through Fighting for Breath we will explore options and health-care strategies that will allow asthma patients to take control of their disease through education and proper management strategies.

"We are proud to be assembling such a dynamic and first-class group of physicians, researchers, patients and industry champions to exchange and share cutting-edge thoughts, discoveries and treatment strategies at this year's event," said Vanessa Foran, President & CEO of the Asthma Society of Canada.

Georges Laraque, a 13-year veteran of the National Hockey League, and asthma sufferer himself, will be the keynote speaker at the conference's awards dinner on May 6th. At this dinner, awards will be presented to following individuals:

- Leadership in Public Policy Award to the Honourable Shannon Phillips, Alberta's Minister of the Environment and Climate Change whose government took the necessary leadership to ensure Albertans would have clean air to breathe when she announced the phase-out of coal fired electricity generation in the Province of Alberta by 2030.
- Leadership in Advocacy Award to Sandra Gibbons and MPP Jeff Yurek who through unspeakable tragedy came together to advocate and pass Ryan's Law, named after Sandra's late son, to ensure children with asthma in Ontario would be able to attend school safely with easy access to their medication.
- Leadership in Health Research Award and the Bastable-Potts Asthma Research Award to Dr. Parameswaran Nair, who is recognized for his innovative research into Severe Asthma and his lifetime commitment to furthering our understanding of this debilitating disease.

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Asthma is the third-most common chronic disease in Canada which affects nearly 3 million Canadians, including 15-20% of all children. Severe Asthma, a more acute and lethal form of asthma, severely impacts the health and well-being of as many as 250,000 Canadians.

Fighting for Breath will be the first step towards establishing national, provincial and territorial responses to this debilitating disease. "Severe Asthma can be better managed and controlled than it is today," added Vanessa Foran. "If we can rally against Severe Asthma, we will save lives and improve the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of patients and their families," Foran concluded.

- Other speakers at the conference will include:
- Dr. Mark FitzGerald, University of British Columbia
- Dr. Dilini Vethanayagam, University of Alberta
- Dr. Alan Kaplan, Family Physician's Airways Group
- Dr. Jason Lee, Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology
- Dr. Harold Kim
- Dr. Parameswaran Nair, McMaster University
- Brent Fraser, Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health
- Dr. Joel Lexchin, York University
- Dr. Nigel Rawson, Eastlake Research Group
- Penny Grant, Margaret Leigh & Bill Swan, Severe Asthma Patients
- Vanessa Foran, Asthma Society of Canada
- More information on the conference can be found at: www.fightingforbreath.ca

About the Asthma Society of Canada

The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) is a national charitable volunteer-supported organization devoted to enhancing the quality of life and health for people living with asthma and associated allergies through education, research and advocacy. The ASC has a 42-year reputation of providing health education services to patients and healthcare professionals.

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