

## Many Minnesotans With Asthma Need A Plan For A Healthy, Active Life

**April 27, 2005** -- What does veteran NFL running back Jerome Bettis, Olympic gold medalist Tom Malchow and PBS cartoon character 'Buster the Bunny' share in common? All have **asthma**, a chronic respiratory disease that affects an estimated quarter million adult Minnesotans. Tuesday, May 3 is World Asthma Day, and asthma specialists are using the event to encourage people with uncontrolled asthma to develop an asthma treatment plan with their doctors.

"If you have uncontrolled asthma, a treatment plan can help you lead a full, active life," said Erin Simmons, manager of the Minnesota Asthma Coalition. "When your asthma is under control, you can sleep through the night and do normal activities without wheezing or coughing."

Simmon's coalition works closely with the American Lung Association of Minnesota (ALAMN) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), which has developed an online asthma action plan for physicians and patients (see sidebar for link). Bettis, a star with the Pittsburgh Steelers, is sharing his personal story of how he has lived with asthma for 20 years to encourage others with the disease to develop a treatment plan. Olympian swimmer Malchow, originally from Mendota Heights, Minn, has worked with the MDH and ALAMN on anti-smoking public service announcements. "Buster's Breathless," an episode of the popular PBS cartoon series "Arthur," will air on Twin Cities Public Television (TPT 2) on May 3, 2005 at 4 p.m. The episode's focus on Arthur's friend Buster, a rabbit with asthma that learns how to better manage his illness.

The Minnesota Asthma Coalition, which is sponsored by the ALAMN and MDH, is sponsoring a number of activities statewide to raise awareness of asthma:

- Asthma education, games and demonstrations will be included in "**Family Night**" at the Willmar YMCA, 1000 Lakeland Drive SE, Willmar, Minn. on May 1 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- **Nick Mueller Asthma Awareness Walk**, a fundraiser in memory of a student who died of asthma will be held at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 7, on the New Ulm Bike Trail, New Ulm, Minn.
- **Family Asthma Education Night**, 6 to 8:30 p.m., April 27, Sibley Co. Service Center, Gaylord, Minn.

### Asthma Resources

**American Lung Association of Minnesota Call Center: 1-800-548-8252**

#### **MDH Online Asthma Plan**

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/ActionPlan.html>

#### **Minnesota Asthma Information Center**

[www.ALAMN.org/InfoCenter](http://www.ALAMN.org/InfoCenter)

#### **Minnesota Asthma Coalition**

<http://www.mnasthma.org/mnasthma/>