



Quick Reference Guide For Asthma Diagnosis and Treatment

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) first issued Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma in 1991.¹ At the time, it was considered a landmark in the management of asthma, and the publication of an updated version of the Guidelines in 1997 was considered no less important.² In community planning sessions conducted by the Rhode Island Asthma Control Program, primary care physicians, pulmonologists, allergists, and emergency medicine physicians alike have referred to the Guidelines as a major asset in the physician's armamentarium against asthma, the "gold standard" against which all approaches to asthma management should be evaluated.

Nonetheless, the Guidelines has not been widely used in front-line medical practices. Like many "gold standards," the Guidelines is comprehensive, complex, and cumbersome. The latest version is almost 150 pages long. As many physicians in Rhode Island and throughout the country have noted, the format of the Guidelines is especially ill-suited for use in hectic primary care practices.

In response, Dr. Charles Sherman and Dr. Sidney Braman of the Rhode Island Asthma Control Program have developed a Quick Reference Guide for Asthma Diagnosis and Treatment. The Guide is based on the NHLBI's Guide-

lines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma, and reflects the most up-to-date configuration of stepped care (step up and step down) for asthma. As they developed the Guide, Drs. Sherman and Braman discussed it with physicians from a variety of specialties, modifying it on the basis of their comments.

The practice of medicine undergoes steady, sometimes rapid change, and the medical management of asthma is no exception. For this reason, Drs. Sherman and Braman consider the Quick Reference Guide for Asthma Diagnosis and Treatment to be a working document, subject to periodic updates and continuing discussion in the medical community. As such updates occur, the Asthma Control Program will keep physicians throughout Rhode Island informed. We hope you find the present Guide to be a help in your practice.

1. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. *Expert Panel Report: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma*. National Institutes of Health pub no 913642. Bethesda, MD, 1991.
2. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. *Expert Panel Report 2: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma*. National Institutes of Health pub no. 974051. Bethesda, MD 1997.

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