

Open Airways - Year in Review 2020 - an EXTRA-ordinary year!



Open Airways is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of over 8,000 people in Bermuda whose lives are affected by asthma and other long-term breathing difficulties.

Letter from our Founder & Director - Liz Boden

To all our patients, health professionals and donors, without whose support none of our work would be possible.

2020 was indeed an extraordinary year, one which none of us could ever have imagined. Like so many other charities we had to be creative and find new ways to help people, while following all the strict COVID -19 guidelines. We learnt the key word was 'PIVOT'! No longer able to visit patients in their homes or facilitate asthma and COPD workshops for health professionals or community groups. No more health fairs, no pop-up events and no World Asthma day celebrations. We were unable to visit schools or seniors in residential care.

Mary, Tracy and I have worked from home communicating by phone, emails and Zoom meetings. Board meetings have also been on Zoom. Imagine, this time last year we didn't even know what a Zoom meeting was!

Finally, there is a Silver Lining - more people have reached out for help, more are taking their preventer inhalers and we hope that we really are *Helping Bermuda Breathe*.

So...how have we been Helping Bermuda Breathe? Here are just some of the ways we have

PIVOTED!

Educate Health Care Professionals (Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Physiotherapists)

We shared international webinars on topics such as the new Global Asthma guidelines given by Prof. Helen Reddel from Australia. We shared the Primary Care Respiratory Society annual 2-day conference from the UK and the Global Respiratory Conference. The conferences covered many COVID-19 related challenges with delivering care and we were pleased to see we had adapted well.

Educate in the Community

Tracy produced 2 excellent videos on the importance of good asthma control especially with COVID-19 in our community. These were posted on Facebook, Instagram and are available on our website. The feedback has been excellent. We have had many Facebook and Instagram posts on ever changing topics relating to COVID-19 from the fear of wearing masks, to the importance of hand washing and the importance of taking preventer inhalers every day.

Educate Individuals

We have offered phone, email and video consultations using Zoom, Facetime or Whatsapp – these have proven to be an excellent way of helping patients while unable to meet face to face. Our consultations increased 400% in 2020! People have out for help more than ever before in an effort to learn asthma control.

Educate in the Schools

We have promoted our free online course **Supporting Children's Health – Asthma** for parents of children with asthma, their teachers and anyone working with children. We successfully distributed spacer devices for students on the City Hall steps in December – following strict COVID-19 guidelines.

Provide Equipment

Spacers have been delivered to patients. **Oxygen concentrators** have been loaned to those without health insurance coverage. We are advocating that all health insurance policies cover this basic necessity for those with COPD in the future.

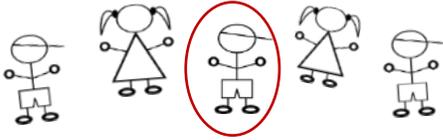
PIVOT

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM *NEW*

This program was established to directly assist those in the community who, due to both the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the resulting economic downturn, were no longer able to afford their respiratory medications. The program helps those who are unemployed, uninsured or underinsured to purchase their vital respiratory medications. People with asthma and COPD were fearful of catching the virus, fearful of the Emergency room and then many lost their jobs and their health insurance. We quickly realized they needed help to provide the basic inhalers to prevent and control their symptoms. The **Medication Assistance Program** was established, accounts were set up at every pharmacy and a donation from The Community Foundation COVID-19 Emergency Fund helped to get us started. This was followed by generous donations from individuals, businesses and other Foundations. To date, we are helping over 70 patients and more people are being enrolled in the program all the time. Every 3 months we review their asthma control; it has been so rewarding to hear their stories – many have never had well controlled asthma before!

SCOPE of Asthma - In Bermuda

Approximately **1 in 5 school children** have asthma.
In a classroom of 15, most likely 3 children will have asthma.



Approximately **1 in 10 adults** have asthma.

>8,000

Estimated number of people in Bermuda with asthma.

ASTHMA
is the
#1 REASON
why people visit
EMERGENCY!

EMERGENCY
(April 2019 - March 2020)
1,491 asthma-related visits
Over 4 asthma patients
go to ER every day!

Good News, Statistics and Feedback

Good news (in light of COVID-19) Around the world people with well-controlled Asthma appear to fare better than others - fewer admissions to the hospital, fewer treated in ICU, fewer deaths!

Open Airways consultations - up 400%!

Now also offered by phone, email or video.

Social Media (in 2020) - has proven a great way to reach people in the community. Using Facebook, Instagram as well as our website and email, we are able to disseminate information quickly and effectively.

Medication Assistance Program - Currently helping over 70 patients (and growing steadily) - this program is changing lives. Our program protocols give us the opportunity to review asthma control with the patient every three months, which is leading to much better control and understanding by the patients.

Thank you so much for helping me get my Asthma under control. *You saved my life in March - I thank God every day!* You took the time to meet with me, not just to drop off medication but you brought pamphlets and took the time to show me how to use it correctly. You went above and beyond to get me sponsored financially in order to receive my most needed medication as I am out of work and have no insurance. I'm truly blessed to have met you and I want to thank you for all you do. Not just for me but for the community of people who suffer with Asthma. ~Andrea

Thanks so much. I learned so much this morning with you and our session together. Amazing! We are so lucky here in Bermuda to have such an incredible resource! I am honestly excited about my asthma treatment now...excited about medical stuff?!?!? Never have I ever!!! ~FRD

"BETTY" - May 2020 - Betty called Open Airways late one evening, very distressed, could not breathe, barely able to speak, and did not want to go to the hospital due to COVID-19 - a known asthmatic she thought she knew how to manage. Thankfully Betty did call an ambulance. She did NOT have COVID - this was a life-threatening asthma attack. When she got home she wrote...

"Good day Mrs. Boden, If you did not ask me to promise that I would go to the hospital Friday night I probably would have died. the ambulance came for me at 2:00 a.m. At around 10:30 a.m. I collapsed and woke up in the intensive care on a ventilator. Thank God I'm home now resting and reflecting so that I can get the education I need to manage this awful crisis. Thank you for your support. ~Betty"

Liz spoke with Betty on the phone frequently (unable to visit during Shelter in Place) and suggested she watch one of Open Airways 30 minute video presentations where Tracy Nash explains what asthma is and how the medications work and how to use them effectively.

June 4, 2020 "Good day Mrs. Boden, Thank you for suggesting that I visit your facebook page and watch the video. I'm able to use the following information as support to manage this complication. Is your asthma controlled was the question that caught my attention. I want that for me. Nurse Tracy shared a person can have no asthma symptoms." (Betty continued with specifics from the video which she now understands and Thanks Open Airways for their life-saving assistance.

Conclusion: Betty had a life-threatening asthma attack, Open Airways helped her to get the best hospital care and then followed up with phone calls, e mails and a video presentation.

Betty is now feeling better than she ever remembers feeling and apparently cycled from Somerset to Warwick last week! Betty's life has been saved and hopefully changed forever.

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Bermuda Registered Charity #458

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Thank you for your continued support of Open Airways!

Should you wish to **DONATE** to OPEN AIRWAYS please visit www.openairways.com

Helping Bermuda Breathe!

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