



spotlight on health

NBA Star Tyson Chandler Dunks Myths about Asthma While Challenging the Nation's Youth at the Jr. NBA/Jr. WNBA Basketball Skills Challenge

(NAPSA)—NBA player Tyson Chandler was diagnosed with exercise-induced asthma in 2004 but the New Orleans Hornets center is living proof that the condition doesn't have to stop patients with asthma from working to achieve their goals. By partnering with his doctor, Tyson has been able to keep his asthma under control so that he can still train for the basketball season and be at the top of his game.

Chandler is an ambassador for the Jr. NBA/Jr. WNBA Skills Challenge, which is a nationwide competition for boys and girls aged 9 through 14 that allows them to test their fundamental basketball skills through half-court obstacle events between December 2008 and May 2009. The Skills Challenge not only aims at generating enthusiasm around basketball but also at helping spread the word about asthma control through a partnership with Merck & Co.

"I am really happy to be an ambassador for the program as the Skills Challenge not only helps build basketball participation but also will help spread the word about asthma control," Chandler said. "As an asthma patient myself, helping educate parents of children with asthma is dear to my heart."

As part of the Skills Challenge events, an educational brochure about asthma will be available for parents on-site. More than 700 local competitions will take place through March 2009, followed by regional competitions concluding in mid-April. National finals will be held in May 2009 in Orlando, FL., where winners will meet Tyson Chandler.



Today, about 6.8 million children suffer from asthma. As an asthma patient himself, Tyson Chandler hopes that his personal story will help dispel the myth that children with asthma must limit their physical activities. Recently released asthma guidelines from experts actually believe physical activity, including exercise and sports, should be encouraged for children with asthma as it can help a child stay fit and also strengthen a child's breathing muscles and help the lungs work better. Parents of children with asthma should speak with their doctors to make sure that their child's asthma is well controlled before participating in physical activity.

It is important that parents understand their child's condition and continue educating themselves on asthma control as there are many other myths about asthma such as:

- Myth: No symptoms means no asthma.
- Fact: Even if your child doesn't have symptoms every day, your child's asthma is there every day.

- Myth: Asthma can hold children back.

- Fact: Asthma symptoms should not keep children from having fun or enjoying an active lifestyle. Asthma experts actually believe physical activity should be part of a healthy lifestyle for children with asthma, when appropriate.

To learn more about their child's condition, parents should speak with their child's doctor. They can also access online asthma resources, such as www.ASTHMyths.com, to find out more about some of the common myths surrounding asthma.

"It is important for parents of children with asthma to continue educating themselves on asthma control so that they can learn to better track their child's symptoms and triggers and share this important information with their child's doctor. An ongoing dialogue with your child's doctor is a critical way to help maintain control over the condition. When properly controlled, asthma should not limit your child's activity, including playing sports like basketball," said Dr. El-Dahr, Chief of Pediatric Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology at Tulane University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, LA.

Tyson Chandler hopes that his story will inspire others like him to keep their asthma under control in order to continue working toward achieving their dreams. Children and their parents can visit www.NBA.com/jrnba to find out more about the Skills Challenge and download an application to enroll in their local Skills Challenge event.