

I T I C S

M E D I C I N E



Susan Farley for The New York Times

Lois T. Bronz, newly elected chairwoman of the Board of Legislators, in the County Chambers at the Michaelian Office Building in White Plains.

one of us.'"

Mr. Bronz was a native New Yorker, and at the time was teaching at Tuckahoe High School. The family moved to Greenburgh because of the reputation of the schools. Mrs. Bronz taught math in the public schools in Greenburgh, and soon became active in the community. She was asked to run for the town board in 1973, and her local political career began.

She is proud of her work in Greenburgh; she points to the low-income housing there as a model. Mrs. Bronz also believes that the Board of Legislators has accomplished important projects during her tenure there. She is pleased with the county's establishment of the Human Rights Commission and also its decision to spin off the Westchester Medical Center, once a department of the

county government, into an independent, competitive health care facility.

With her new position, Mrs. Bronz said that she will have to relinquish some of her many outside commitments. She sits on the board of 14 nonprofit organizations. She has already had to limit her time on the sewing machine and actually buy some of her clothing. She also cooks; a coveted prize at several local fundraisers is Mrs. Bronz's gumbo for 10.

One thing she is not willing to give up is her weekly bowling with the Sacred Heart Mothers' Bowling League. She says she wants to keep up the exercise. And at an age where many people might be winding down their professional lives, Mrs. Bronz is gearing up for her biggest challenge.

"Listen, I'm still on the upside of the mountain," she said, smiling.

Asthma Project Aids Students

By SAXON HENRY

JENN BILLINGSLEY, an 11th grader at the Harvey School in Katonah, has been averaging an asthma attack every week in recent months. But she is breathing easier at school now, thanks to the Asthma Management Program. The project, financed by the Pinnacle Health Care Network, provides compressors, nebulizer handsets, peak flow meters and medication to participating public, private and parochial schools in Westchester and Putnam Counties at no cost to the school districts.

School nurses also receive the most current asthma treatment training in return for documentation of the number of times the equipment is used and the results of those treatments.

Jeff Byrne, director of the asthma program at St. John's Riverside Hospital in Yonkers, initiated the program in 1995 when school nurses attending a support group for parents of asthmatic children remarked that students experiencing asthma episodes at school were sent home or to the emergency room. Mr. Byrne approached St. John's, garnering a \$15,000 grant to begin the program in Yonkers.

Rosemary Lee, supervisor for Environmental Health and Violence Prevention Services at the Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Southern Westchester, said nurses — who are not allowed to diagnose and can only use the equipment and medications with the consent of the student's doctor — were eager for the program. Ms. Lee helped Mr. Byrne to expand the program into southern Westchester schools, and in 1998-99, the 937 students who were treated were able to return to class 95 percent of the time. Hudson Valley Hospital Center in Cortlandt Manor has opened the program to Northern Westchester and Putnam County schools. Scott Coldwell, a respiratory therapist who trains participants at the center, said, "When Jeff first sent me the information, I was dumbfounded that asthmatic students were losing so much class time."

Jeanne Puchir, the nurse at the Harvey School, received training from the Hudson Valley Hospital Center in October. "Knowing that the nebulizer is here eases the anxiety level of an asthmatic child during an attack," she said. Jenn Billingsley agreed: "It's comforting to know that the equipment's here," she said.

Mr. Byrne said 61 percent of the school districts in Westchester County are participating. During the 2000-01 school year, 93 percent of the 1,632 students treated returned to the classroom; emergency room visits decreased by 91 percent; and 36 percent fewer students were sent home than the previous year. Ms. Lee said the program, which received an Ernest A. Codman Award from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in October, is being considered by the state Department of Health as a pilot program.

Helen Turchioe, executive director of Pinnacle, said financing would continue. "The program's been a tremendous success and we'll continue to grow it for as long as we can," she said. For more information, in Southern Westchester, call Rosemary Lee at (914) 345-8500, extension 120. In Northern Westchester and Putnam call Mr. Coldwell at (914) 734-3810.