

National Respiratory Care Week

# PLANNING GUIDE

Your guide to celebrating and promoting  
respiratory health



# *Plan Fun and Successful Events for National Respiratory Care Week October 25-31, 2020*

Thank you for getting involved and for raising awareness in respiratory health and inspiring your fellow respiratory therapists! To help you plan your Respiratory Care Week celebrations, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) has what you need to get started and to keep you on track.

RC Week is your chance to celebrate the profession and let your community know how vital you are to patient health. This has been a tough year with respiratory therapists thrust into the spotlight. Your collaboration with health care colleagues and dedication to your patients and community through this pandemic is absolutely amazing. Thank you for all you do each day. Together, we save lives.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and potential restrictions around group activities, some activities in this planning guide may not be possible or will need to be adapted. Refer to current CDC health guidelines, along with your institution's policies, before planning or participating in the activities recommended in this planning guide.

## **GETTING STARTED (2-3 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR RC WEEK EVENT)**

- **Talk to your manager** before (and after) you start making plans. Keep your manager informed and be sure you know the budget, especially if there isn't one!
- **Find out what has been done in the past.** Were those activities ones you'd like to repeat? Are there any special traditions or awards that should be continued?
- **Keep it simple.** It's better to plan only one or two activities until you know what each involves. If you want more, add them later one or two at a time.
- **Decide what you want to accomplish**—fun, recognition, awareness in the hospital or community, etc. Then keep those goals in mind throughout the planning process. Activity ideas from the successes of other teams like yours are listed on pages 6–9.
- **Determine what resources you can use at your facility for advice and help**, such as the marketing, public relations, or perhaps human resources teams. They can sometimes assist with activities large or small, but contact them early to give them plenty of time. And don't forget your social media expert or the communication manager.



## GETTING STARTED (continued)

- **Find out what's happening in your community.** Branch out and see what's going on around the RC Week dates that offer participation opportunities. Fall is often a favorite time of year for fairs or other public or school events. And the marketing department might be interested in promoting your facility.
- **Consider the staff member's ability to participate.** When reviewing activity ideas, consider how each can be done with a department that is on shifts and works in various areas.
- **Assemble your volunteer team early.** Be sure to ask them early and be clear about what they will be asked to do.
- **Schedule as soon as possible.** If your activities involve local schools, be aware of their schedules. For example, if you want to be a speaker at a high school during RC Week, be sure to make contact before summer ends or as soon as school reopens in the fall.
- **Know the logistics.** For each activity you select, make sure you know what is required and how long it will take. Be mindful of any special planning needs or inter-department coordination.
- **Confirm possible fees or permission needs.** If you are going to be doing special events in the hospital or at public venues, determine whether there are any fees or any special permission needed.

*One last tip: Enjoy your planning experience.*

Remember that Respiratory Care Week's primary goal is to recognize the contributions of respiratory care professionals and raise awareness about respiratory health. This goal can be achieved in many different ways on any type of budget. And although it would be great to do everything you want to on the actual Respiratory Care Week, conflicts do arise. So make the dates work for you.

## SHARE YOUR STORY!

Spread the excitement and share what you're doing by sending a short description of your activity along with some photos to [heather.willden@aacrc.org](mailto:heather.willden@aacrc.org). Social Media is a great platform to spread public awareness on Respiratory Care Week. Visit our RC Week webpage and check out our social media toolkit for graphics and message resources. Use **#RCWeek20** on your own social media graphics, and Facebook and Twitter posts for consistent messaging.





## Share Your Photos and Stories

### Step 1.

Send your photos and stories to **AARC** and we'll include them in one or all of the following: AARC news, AARC Tweets, AARC Facebook page and *AARC Times* magazine:

**Email photos to [heather.wilden@aarc.org](mailto:heather.wilden@aarc.org). Include the following:**

- Name of the facility/organization hosting the event
- Your full name and credentials
- Your city and state
- Your email address
- What you did to celebrate, in 100 words or less

### Step 2.

Post your #RCWeek20 photos on your social media channels. Tag your posts #RCWeek20.

### Step 3.

Stay tuned to the AARC website, Facebook, Twitter and *AARC Times* for a roundup of all the activities and to see the shared stories and photos from your fellow members.



# Raise Awareness About Lung Health and Respiratory Care

There are many ways to engage your staff, facility and community. Explore these popular ideas here and on the following pages to see what fits within your budget and resources.

- **Organize a special event or free health screening at your facility**, a school or other local venue to educate the community.
- Sponsor events that **offer employees continuing education for CRCE**, acknowledgement of accomplishments or teambuilding activities.
- **Provide information about respiratory therapists** through presentations or career fairs to help recruit future RTs.
- **Raise funds for the American Respiratory Care Foundation (ARCF)**, which supports respiratory research and education for respiratory professionals and the patients they serve. Learn more at [www.arcfoundation.org](http://www.arcfoundation.org).

## Save the Date! Future National Respiratory Care Weeks

Respiratory Care Week is always celebrated on the last full week of October (Sunday through Saturday). *Upcoming dates are:*

- October 25–31, 2020
- October 24–30, 2021
- October 23–29, 2022
- October 22–28, 2023



# Events and Activities for Employees

- Acknowledge the accomplishments of your team, including administrative staff, with **an awards luncheon or recognition reception**.
- Hold a **boxed lunch day** that provides continuing education credit.
- **Thank everyone on your staff with a personal note** or eCard.
- **Make a video about your respiratory team** and show it at a pizza party for your staff.
- **Raise funds for the American Respiratory Care Foundation**, supporting respiratory education and research.
- **Reward a staff member with an AARC membership**, webcast, or online educational course.
- **Give away door prizes** at a staff Bingo night.
- **Invite management to an RC Week staff function**.
- **Play a respiratory or department trivia game** or have a mini-Sputum Bowl.
- **Designate a friends and family day**. Invite spouses and children to come to the facility to learn more about what you do.
- If your hospital sponsors research in respiratory diseases, **ask the researchers to update your team on what's happening in this important arena**.
- In addition to regular awards, **make a recognition event fun with comedy awards** for “most creative” moments or “fastest on your feet.”
- **Send a thank you note to others who support your team** with a formal letter to their managers.





## Events and Activities for Students and Future RTs

- Contact the local high school science clubs or health science education classes and **offer to be a speaker about a career as a respiratory therapist.**
- Invite the graduating class of local RT students to an information session or Q&A at your facility. **Provide a tour or open house.**
- **Have a career day** and invite students and guidance counselors to come to your facility to learn more about your department and the profession.
- **Implement a mentoring program** with RT students in your area.
- **Ask local high schools or community colleges if they have career fairs** and ask to participate.
- Many high schools and colleges have their own TV or radio stations. Contact them to see if you can **get on a local show to talk about the profession.**
- **High School Career Project** — Work with local high schools in your area to inform students and teachers about the rewards and opportunities of becoming a respiratory therapist.

# Events and Activities for the Community

- **Gather a team to participate in a local 5K** or other fun run event and wear your RC Week t-shirts.
- **Set up a table at a local fall fair** with information about lung health awareness.
- **Have a bowling tournament or volleyball tournament** at a favorite local spot and invite the community and the press.
- Set up a fundraiser to **send a pediatric patient to asthma camp**.
- **Conduct an “Inhaler Check-Up Clinic”** to check your patients’ techniques with their aerosol delivery devices.
- **Enlist an asthma patient** who participates in school sports to encourage other young patients to become more active.
- Get involved with **community anti-smoking campaigns**.
- **Invite local television, radio, and newspaper reporters to take a spirometry test** and learn why such testing is important.
- Work with fitness experts from local health clubs about **exercises for COPD patients**. Ask local television stations to cover it.
- **Offer a free session on asthma triggers** at the library, YMCA, or senior center.
- **Perform spirometry screenings** at a local senior center.
- **Provide local public libraries and senior centers with a listing of website resources** to post for patrons.
- **Set up a fundraiser for respiratory education and research** for the American Respiratory Care Foundation.







## Events and Activities for Facilities

- **Put an announcement on your facility's computer network.**
- **Organize an art show** and ask your pediatric patients to create posters about breathing or air.
- **Ask a local chef to prepare some healthy foods** in an educational activity for your COPD patients.
- **Place an announcement about your activities in the hospital newsletter/calendar of events.**
- **Have a peak flow contest** to see who has the most "hot air."
- **Organize a Vent 5K.**
- **Invite other facility staff to a boxed lunch event** where you can bring them up to date on the latest advances in respiratory care.
- **Show a Be an RT video in the cafeteria** during a lunch hour to demonstrate the role of respiratory therapists in health care.

## Ideas for Manufacturers, Service Providers, and Others

- **Send a letter to each customer** with sentiments for RC Week.
- **Arrange for a company-wide message to be sent** announcing Respiratory Care Week, your role in the profession, and the importance of RTs in health care.
- **Post a message or banner on your company website** recognizing Respiratory Care Week and respiratory therapists.
- **Sponsor an in-service educational event** for your customers in honor of RC Week.
- **Place an RC Week congratulatory advertisement** in professional publications read by RTs.
- **Make a company donation to a respiratory charity** or foundation in the name of respiratory therapists.

# Get the Word Out with Public Relations

- **Encourage your management, marketing and public relations departments to get involved** in your activities to gain free publicity for the facility or company.
- **Obtain an Official RC Week Proclamation** from the Governor or Mayor.
- **Reach out to journalists.** Ask local/regional newspapers and magazines if they are doing a special editorial series in the field of health care or health careers. Perhaps they can feature your team.
- **Get on the morning show on TV or radio** to talk about RC Week and your profession.
- **Host a silent auction to raise money for a scholarship** for an RT student.
- **Invite your local, state, or national elected officials into your facility** and explain why it's important that respiratory therapy is covered in all care settings, including home care. Make it a public screening event, and be sure the media is on hand.
- **See what your state society is doing.** Are there any statewide events going on?
- **Send your respiratory product reps an email about RC Week event dates** and let them know your plans.
- **Tell your state society and your AARC public relations department what you're doing to promote RC Week.** You may just make it into our national magazine or be featured on the website.

## Public Relations Tools

Use the **AARC Member PR Kit** to learn tips of the trade to turn RC Week in your community into a public relations opportunity.

For the AARC Member PR Kit visit: <https://aarc.org/go/pr-kit>



# Visit the AARC RC Week Store for official RC Week products

The AARC and RC Week partner Jim Coleman, Ltd. offers themed products to support your events and activities for RC Week—and any other time of year.

## ***The AARC RC Week Store:***

- Offers AARC Member discounts
- Supports AARC programs and services for members
- Accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover

RC Week Store: [www.aarc.org/go/rcweek20-store](http://www.aarc.org/go/rcweek20-store)



## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**(Q)** *How do I get a discount for being an AARC member?*

**(A)** Enter your AARC member number when shopping and you'll receive the discounted member price.

**(Q)** *Who do I contact with questions about product orders?*

**(A)** 1) Questions about products or orders from the RC Week store contact:  
[service@jimcolemanltd.com](mailto:service@jimcolemanltd.com) or 847-963-8100.

2) Questions about educational, management, or professional products from the AARC Store contact: [info@aarc.org](mailto:info@aarc.org) or 972-243-2272.

# Additional Respiratory Products and Publications are Available at the AARC Store

The AARC store provides respiratory professionals with continuing education products, DVDs, management tools, brochures, handouts and guides for recruiting future respiratory therapists and educating patients. Refer to the AARC store any time of year to supplement your respiratory facility and event needs.

**AARC Store:** [www.aarc.org/go/aarc-store](http://www.aarc.org/go/aarc-store)

