STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL HEALTH FAIR
You’re in charge of hosting a booth or table at a health fair or community event. Here are some simple tips to help you plan for a successful outcome.

Know your audience

• What type of event is it?
  o Local community event with a variety of activities
  o Regional event such as a state fair
  o Health fair
  o Wellness event for employees of a manufacturing plant
  o A themed event
Your event contact should already have a “target audience” in mind since that’s who they will be marketing to most heavily for attendance. But if you’re not sure, don’t be shy about asking.

Focus on a specific objective

• You’ll make a stronger impression and have more impact if you stick with a specific respiratory care topic.
• The objective should be directly related to your audience. Some obvious examples might be:
  o Families with small children >> asthma and allergy prevention
  o Teenagers >> Respiratory Therapy as a career
  o Baby Boomers >> Living with COPD
• Or the objective could be related to the theme of the event. For a “going green” event, maybe you want to focus on smoking cessation.

Know the logistics
A good event planner will have all this information ready for you in a nice package. But just in case....

• Confirm the date(s) and hours for the event.
  o Don’t forget to ask about setup hours, too. You’ll want to have plenty of time to get everything ready. If you think it will only take an hour, plan for two!
  o Remember to allow for time to pack up after the event is over.

• Confirm the event location.
  o This may seem like a no-brainer, but don’t assume that you know exactly where to go on the day of the event just because you have the address or know the facility. Upon arrival, you may find out that the fair is in an exhibit hall on the other side of the building from the main entrance.
  o Is it indoors or outdoors?
  o Find out about parking. You’ll want to know where the best spot is for bringing in everything you’ll need for the fair. And is parking free or not?

• What is the setup?
  o Be sure you know how much space you will have. Is it a 10’ x 10’ booth – or an 8’ table?
  o Know your specific location onsite. Even at a small event, there are usually assigned spots.
  o What is being provided?
    ▪ Are there tables and chairs? Are the tables skirted or something more like school cafeteria style? This will help you decide what to take for an effective display.
    ▪ If you need electrical power or anything else technical, be sure to ask. It’s not usually included.
Plan your display and activities

• Be sure your display and your activities match your objective.
• Here are some displays and activities that others have used effectively:
  o Peak flow measurement
  o Spirometry screening
  o Pulse oximetry
  o Smokers lung vs nonsmokers lung
  o Typical allergens
• Bear in mind the logistics. What can you effectively do in the space available?
• Make your display colorful, simple and easy-to-read to attract people as they walk by.
• Hang a banner on the front of your table or plan a display board to sit on the table. If you have other display items that can stand up behind you, that’s great, too. (P.S. Skirted tables are great for hiding boxes of extra materials. If tables are not skirted, you may want to bring a tablecloth or sheet.) Your marketing or public relations department may be able to help.
• Bring some literature that visitors can take along – but remember that a table full of literature and nothing else will not attract people to your display. If you don’t have materials of your own, several choices are available through the AARC Store.
• It’s always a good idea for everyone working at your table to dress similarly for a professional appearance – logo’d shirts, scrubs, lab coats. Logo’d t-shirts are fine, too, and perfect for those outdoor events in the summer.
• Everyone should wear badges that show their names clearly. If badges are not provided for the event, bring your own. Even stick-on badges from the office supply store are better than none.

Determine staffing needs

• Even if it’s only a 4-hour event with an 8’ table, have at least 2 people at your table so that no one has to wait to talk to you or participate in your activities.
• Plan for backup staff in case there’s a last-minute change.
• For longer events, a larger booth, or multiple activities, plan accordingly. While you don’t want to be crowded behind the table, you should have enough staff to do your planned activities and also talk to others who are waiting or just want to ask questions. Make a firm schedule and plan for breaks and rotation.
• Be sure the staff knows what’s expected of them. Reconfirm with them a couple of times before the event – perhaps about a week out and the day before. Remember to give them the location details.
• Share contact information (yours and the staff) for the day of the event.

Tips for communicating effectively

• You already know how to communicate effectively with your patients. But fairs are a different scenario. People who attend may be very interested and come over the moment they see your display. But sometimes they will be shy about approaching – or your topic may not be relevant to them. So just smile, be friendly, and invite people to come to your display.
• Keep conversation simple and short. Your objective is to get their attention on the subject at hand.
• Give them some type of literature to take away so they can learn more later if they’re interested.
• Thank them for their time.

Finally....
Relax at the event and enjoy yourself. After all, you love what you do and want to help others in your community breathe a little easier.

The AARC has plenty of additional resources, too.

- Making a display board
- Photo gallery
- Getting the word out about the event

The AARC Store has products to supplement your efforts, too.

- Banners
- Printed materials for health fairs
- Brochures for career fairs
- Shirts with embroidered logos
- Respiratory Care t-shirts