**High Levels of Tree Pollen Plague Allergy Sufferers**

*Who are the stakeholders?*

Obviously, anyone who is allergic to tree pollen has a stake in this story. So do allergy doctors and nurses. But also consider arborists and lawn and garden service companies that might see business increase when people with allergies just can't stand to do outdoor work. City officials might have a stake in it, too, if they've decided to plant specific types of trees that trigger pollen allergies. Health insurance companies could be affected if more people seek treatment for allergies, as would manufacturers of allergy medicines and pharmacies.

*What's the problem?*

Runny noses, watery eyes, sore throats—those are the problems allergy sufferers are having. But think more broadly about the impact of those symptoms and you can see that they don't just affect individuals. Companies have to deal with employees calling in sick. Allergy doctors may be booked solid. Gyms may have more customers because people aren't exercising outdoors.

*Where does [did] this story come from and where is it going?*

You might think the problem is the arrival of spring, and that it will be over once the season changes. But consider whether the problem is worse this year than before, and if so, why? Could climate change be having an effect on allergy season, making it longer or more intense? Think about whether the problem is worse in some places than others: pollen tends to swirl around more in cities than it does in the countryside.

With all of these questions in mind, here's one way you might have approached this story:

Let's find out if city tree-planting policies are making allergy season worse.

Sources you might want to consult:

* A local allergist or allergy researcher
* A person suffering from allergies
* A plant expert, possibly from the local extension service
* City officials who oversee tree planting