

# BREATHING EASIER *in* **GEORGIA**



SUCCESS STORIES FROM  
THE GEORGIA ASTHMA  
CONTROL PROGRAM

“The nature of asthma exacerbations are instigated by triggers, and those triggers can be experienced where you live, learn, work or play. Because these are primarily public domains, this is where public health and the Georgia Asthma Control Program come in. Our CDC partnership is vital to the existence of the asthma program itself and to our ability to conduct surveillance of asthma’s burden and impact on quality of life for Georgians.”

## FRANCESCA LOPEZ

program manager  
GEORGIA ASTHMA  
CONTROL PROGRAM

All information and data provided by  
the Georgia Department of Public  
Health Asthma Control Program

## THE PROBLEMS:

- About 567,000 Georgia adults and 227,000 children are living with asthma.
- In 2010, more than 52,000 emergency room visits were linked to the chronic respiratory disease, as were more than 10,000 hospitalizations.
- Asthma-related hospitalization costs in Georgia topped \$174 million in 2010 alone.
- More than half of children with asthma and nearly three-quarters of adults with asthma have never received an asthma action plan from a doctor.

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The Georgia Asthma Control Program and its partners focus on communities with the greatest needs. They increase asthma awareness, educate people on how to avoid environmental asthma triggers, partner with local stakeholders, and help residents manage their own health. And their efforts are paying off.

- Knowing that children ages 4 and younger experience the highest rate of asthma-related emergency room visits, the Georgia Asthma Control Program developed an education curriculum for child care providers and learning centers. The curriculum offers education in asthma management, including steps for creating asthma-friendly settings. During the project’s pilot phase in 2012, more than 90 percent of providers said the curriculum improved their ability to recognize disease symptoms and to engage parents in reducing asthma risks. The asthma program’s goal is for the curriculum to become a requirement for child care licensing.
- The Georgia Asthma Control Program convenes the Georgia Asthma Advisory Coalition, a diverse group of stakeholders who guide the program’s activities and contribute to accomplishing its goals. In 2012 the coalition, along with the asthma program, developed the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan for Addressing Asthma in Georgia. This plan for a statewide response to asthma management and control addresses asthma within the health care delivery, school and child care, indoor and outdoor environment, and family support system settings.
- Since 2009 and thanks to a partnership with the Georgia Association of School Nurses, more than 800 school nurses have taken the asthma program’s free training course in asthma management and asthma-friendly school environments. The partnership also fosters school nurses to work within school systems to champion the adoption of the Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative. The initiative’s goals are to reduce asthma-related hospitalizations, emergencies, and missed school days.
- In Georgia, asthma results in millions of dollars in health care costs, much of which is preventable through an evidence-based, public health approach to asthma control.



## CDC’s National Asthma Control Program

Georgia is one of 36 states that receives funding and technical support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Asthma Control Program. Since 1999, CDC has been leading public health efforts to prevent costly asthma complications, create asthma-friendly environments, and empower people living with asthma with the tools they need to better manage their own health. **Find out more at** [www.cdc.gov/asthma](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma).

