

BREATHING EASIER *in* NEW MEXICO



SUCCESS STORIES FROM
THE NEW MEXICO
ASTHMA PROGRAM

In New Mexico alone, asthma is a leading chronic disease, affecting about one in 10 people. And the cost of treating asthma is enormous, even though many of these costs are preventable. That's why it's important to approach asthma from a public health perspective — not only to reduce the prevalence of asthma attacks, but also to reduce the economic burden.

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NEW MEXICO ASTHMA PROGRAM

All information and data provided by
the New Mexico Department of Health
Asthma Program

THE PROBLEMS:

- As of 2011, more than 156,600 New Mexico adults, or 10 percent of the adult population, was living with asthma. That same year, more than 54,100 of the state's children, or more than 10 percent, were also living with the chronic respiratory disease. Also in 2011, 36 percent of New Mexico adults with asthma missed at least one day of work due to the disease, and 48 percent of children with asthma missed at least one day of school.
- In New Mexico, asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization and the fourth leading cause of emergency department visits among young people ages birth to 14.



THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The New Mexico Asthma Program and its partners focus on groups 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.

- The southeast region of New Mexico is home to some of the highest asthma-related morbidity and hospitalization rates in the state. To address the problem, the New Mexico Asthma Program partnered with a local hospital and the University of New Mexico to implement an evidence-based asthma self-management program. Asthma patients visiting the emergency room and who were at high risk for respiratory complications were connected with a certified asthma educator, who provided education in English and Spanish on reducing asthma triggers and proper inhaler techniques. About 60 patients, mostly youth, participated. The effort resulted in improved asthma self-management and a decrease in hospitalizations and emergency visits. The asthma program and hospital are now working to create sustainability for the program.
- Since 2004, the New Mexico Asthma Program has been supporting the Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program, which helps schools identify air quality problems and put in place low-cost solutions. As of spring 2013, more than 100 schools had successfully implemented the program.
- In 2010, the New Mexico Asthma Program launched the New Mexico Council on Asthma, a diverse group of health professionals and organizations dedicated to asthma control. The council works on many issues, such as raising asthma awareness, promoting asthma-friendly school policies, and expanding insurance reimbursement to cover asthma self-management education. The council was so successful that it moved under the umbrella of the state chapter of the American Lung Association and was able to establish nonprofit status.
- In New Mexico, asthma results in millions of dollars in health care costs — costs that are largely preventable through an evidence-based, public health approach to asthma control.

CDC's National Asthma Control Program

New Mexico 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.

