

BREATHING EASIER *in* ILLINOIS



SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE
ILLINOIS ASTHMA PROGRAM



“Beyond asthma being a chronic disease, it’s a quality of life issue. People with asthma have strained physical and mental health and report fewer healthy days. It takes a public health approach to lessen the triggers that complicate asthma and to protect people with asthma from triggers outside of their control...it takes a community to set up policies and practices that will improve their quality of life.”

NANCY AMERSON

asthma epidemiologist

ILLINOIS ASTHMA PROGRAM

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

THE PROBLEMS:

- As of 2010, more than 9 percent of Illinois adults were currently living with asthma and 14 percent reported ever being diagnosed with the chronic respiratory disease.
- In 2009, 9.2 percent of Illinois’ children, or more than 294,500, had asthma. Adults with asthma are more likely to report being in poor health than those without asthma.
- Though asthma-related hospitalizations have been declining, more than 18,500 such hospitalizations occurred at a cost of more than \$280 million in 2007 alone. Children younger than 5 experience the highest asthma-related hospitalization rates.



THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The Illinois 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 Illinois Asthma Program supports the Illinois Emergency Department Asthma Surveillance Project, a voluntary effort to ensure health care services are aligned with national asthma care guidelines. Participating emergency department staff enter asthma data into a specially designed website and can then view the data historically to pinpoint areas for improvement. For example, staff enter data on asthma severity, asthma prescriptions and use, and whether a patient is offered educational asthma materials. As of spring 2013, the project was still underway. However, the effort will soon transition to taking a collaborative approach to improving care.
- The Illinois Asthma Program created and convenes the Illinois Asthma Partnership, a group of 75 members representing about 50 organizations. Members include local health departments, local asthma control coalitions, hospitals, universities, pharmaceutical companies, and many more. The partnership, which helps tailor asthma interventions to local needs, is critical to helping the state asthma program achieve its strategic goals.
- The Illinois Asthma Program collaborates with partners who are helping schools implement a state law allowing students to carry their asthma inhalers rather than leaving them with a school nurse. For example, the Chicago school district became the first district in the state to implement the self-carry law. Illinois Asthma Partnership member organizations provided technical assistance and education. Also on the school front, the Illinois Asthma Program collaborates with the Illinois Department of Human Services to educate school nurses on asthma issues. During the last training event, 450 school nurses took part.
- In Illinois, 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

Illinois 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.

