

Los Angeles, CA

Working to Achieve Asthma Control

Problem Overview

More than 63,000 children in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) have asthma. Although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled. However, many students with symptoms are not aware that they have asthma, and those who have been diagnosed may not have access to consistent medical services. Additionally, families may not communicate the child's symptoms or living conditions to health care providers.

Program/Activity Description

The LAUSD Asthma Program, through funding from CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, supports a district nursing program to help students understand their asthma, use their medications, and avoid their environmental triggers. The LAUSD Asthma Program uses a coordinated school health approach to create "asthma friendly" schools and provides the following services:

- Educational programs for staff and parents and lessons and instructional materials for students.
- Self-management programs for students with asthma.
- Referrals for medical care and insurance.
- Education on how to improve indoor air quality in the classroom using the Environmental Protection Agency's *Tools for Schools* program.
- Case management for excessive absenteeism or specific medical needs.

Program/Activity Outcomes

Since 2003, the LAUSD Asthma Program has

- Conducted 212 presentations with 19,800 parents, staff, and community members to increase asthma awareness.
- Implemented *Tools for Schools* in 200 schools.
- Provided case management services to 1,350 students.
- Developed medication policies and procedures for students with asthma.

One student's story underscores the value of LAUSD's Asthma Program. Through a referral from the attendance counselor, a school nurse visited the home of an 8-year-old girl with asthma who had many absences, recent urgent care visits, and hospitalizations. Noting various asthma triggers in the home, the nurse encouraged the mother to ask the landlord to fix the problems. Since the issues in the home were fixed, the child has not needed to return to the hospital.

Successful school initiatives, such as the LAUSD Asthma Program, can serve as models for other school districts nationwide to better serve students with asthma.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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Division of Adolescent and School Health
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth

