

BREATHING EASIER *in* WASHINGTON, D.C.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM



“Because the factors that contribute to someone having asthma are often outside a person’s control, asthma management really has to be a coordinated community effort. We want to see quality of life improvements across the lifespan, and that takes a collaborative effort. CDC’s partnership has been essential to seeing this issue addressed.”

LAVERNE JONES

program manager
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM

All information and data provided by
the District of Columbia Department of
Health Asthma Control Program

THE PROBLEMS:

- In 2008, more than 44,400 D.C. adults had asthma and nearly 14,000 children were living with the chronic respiratory disease. That same year, more than 16 percent of D.C. adults and more than 18 percent of children had been diagnosed with asthma at the same point in their lives.
- In 2008, some of the highest asthma-related hospitalization rates were among children younger than 9, followed by adults ages 45 and older.
- In 2007, the asthma-related emergency department rate among children was 338 per 10,000 people.



THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The District of Columbia Asthma Control 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.

- In 2012, the D.C. Asthma Control Program launched an asthma awareness public ad campaign, especially targeting neighborhoods with high asthma rates. Ads on buses and in newspapers carried taglines such as “Be Informed: Get an Asthma Action Plan” and “Asthma Does Not Control My Life.” The ads focus on having an asthma action plan and working with school nurses. For example, a radio ad features a school nurse and a parent talking about how asthma affects a child’s school experience.
- Asthma rates are high among D.C. adults ages 50 and older, yet there were few activities addressing the issue. In response, the D.C. Asthma Control Program developed a curriculum to train social service providers in helping older adults better manage asthma, create asthma-friendly home environments, and respond to an asthma emergency. By early 2013, about 150 people had taken the training.
- The D.C. asthma program developed an asthma training curriculum for local day care providers. The voluntary training includes an overview of asthma treatments as well as tips on mitigating environmental asthma triggers. As of 2012, about 400 D.C. day care providers had taken the training. Participants reported increased asthma knowledge and more confidence in working with children with asthma.
- To reach the city’s Hispanic residents, the D.C. Asthma Control Program and its partners created a fotonovela (a short story almost like a comic book) about a young boy with asthma. About 5,000 copies of the novela were distributed to community centers serving Hispanic neighborhoods.
- In Washington, D.C., 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

Washington, D.C., is among the 36 states that receive 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.

