

BREATHING EASIER *in*

# NORTH CAROLINA



SUCCESS STORIES FROM  
THE NORTH CAROLINA  
ASTHMA PROGRAM



Public health creates the opportunity for going out and providing education on environmental asthma triggers, working with community-based organizations to increase asthma knowledge...all the things that don't always happen in the doctor's office. And we can reinforce what's being done in the doctor's office because the more times people get the message, the more impact we'll have.



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NORTH CAROLINA ASTHMA PROGRAM

All information and data provided by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Asthma Program

## THE PROBLEMS:

- In 2010, more than 900,000 North Carolina adults had been diagnosed with asthma at some point in their lives, and about 535,000 were living with asthma. That same year about 369,000 North Carolina children — more than 12 percent — had the chronic respiratory disease.
- In 2009, nearly 11,000 asthma-related hospitalizations occurred at a cost of more than \$132.5 million. Also, nearly a third of North Carolina children visited an emergency department or urgent health care center in the past year due to complications from asthma.



## THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The North Carolina 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.

- In the fall of 2012, the North Carolina Asthma Program launched its new asthma education curriculum training for school nurses. The curriculum, which covers asthma basics, emergency care, and common environmental triggers, was designed as a resource nurses could use to train other school faculty and personnel. Nurses can also receive continuing education credits for completing the training. By early summer 2013, about 70 school nurses across six counties had participated.
- The North Carolina Asthma Program is an active member of the Asthma Alliance of North Carolina, the largest asthma coalition in the state. The alliance serves as an umbrella group to ensure better asthma coordination and collaboration across the state, and its members play a key advisory role in helping the asthma program develop and implement its state asthma plan. In addition to meeting quarterly, the alliance hosts an annual day-long asthma summit.
- Through its Enhancing Local Asthma Efforts Project, the North Carolina Asthma Program funds six local health departments to provide critical asthma education and resources to residents. Local health officials distribute asthma education tools, help implement air quality advisory and anti-idling campaigns, conduct home-based environmental assessments, train athletic coaches on how to respond to an asthma episode, and much more.
- The North Carolina Asthma Program helped collect and analyze data to justify the state's smoke-free restaurant and bar law, which went into effect in 2010. In fact, further data collection has found a seven percent decrease in the risk of asthma-related emergency department visits among all age groups from 2008–2009 to 2010–2011.
- In North Carolina, 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

North Carolina 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.

