

# BREATHING EASIER *in*

# MAINE



SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE  
MAINE CDC ASTHMA PREVENTION  
AND CONTROL PROGRAM



“Asthma is a public health issue because it’s a disease that’s intimately affected by what’s in the air and in our environments. Most of our efforts as well as the data we collect concerning asthma and its increase in Maine would not be possible without CDC’s partnership.”

## JIM BRADDICK

*program manager*

MAINE CDC ASTHMA PREVENTION AND  
CONTROL PROGRAM

All information and data provided by  
the Maine Department of Health and  
Human Services Asthma Prevention  
and Control Program

## THE PROBLEMS:

- Asthma rates in Maine continue to be among the highest in the nation, with rates among adults higher than the national average.
- In 2010, 10 percent of Maine adults reported living with the chronic respiratory disease, as did 8.5 percent of children.
- Each year, more than 8,000 emergency room visits and more than 1,000 hospitalizations occur due to asthma, costing about \$4.1 million.
- Children younger than five experience the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations and emergency room visits.



## THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The Maine CDC Asthma Prevention and 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.

- The Maine Asthma Prevention and Control Program partners with the Maine Department of Education to educate school nurses in asthma management. After surveying school nurses on their asthma knowledge and needs, the asthma program developed an asthma toolkit that school nurses can use easily when working with students, parents, and fellow school faculty. For example, the toolkit includes information on environmental asthma triggers, asthma and exercise, and asthma self-management. Nearly every school nurse in Maine has received a toolkit.
- In 2011, the Maine asthma program supported healthy homes training for 125 public health, code enforcement, and housing professionals working in localities with a high asthma prevalence. The asthma program is partnering with the Maine CDC Partnership For A Tobacco-Free Maine and the Breathe Easy Coalition to help create asthma-friendly environments in multi-unit housing. In 2011, Maine became the first state in which all public housing authorities adopted smoke-free policies. The asthma program helps public housing authorities implement this policy.
- The Maine asthma program is working with the state chapter of the American Lung Association and the Maine Primary Care Association to train more providers to become certified asthma educators. The goal is to make available additional educators to work with patients at federally qualified health centers. According to state data, such patients are more likely to be living with asthma and are at higher risk of asthma complications. Certified asthma educators work with patients to self-manage their asthma better and have a record of positive health outcomes.
- In Maine, 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

Maine 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](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma).

