



STATE ASTHMA PROGRAM EVALUATION GUIDE

LEARNING
AND GROWING
THROUGH
EVALUATION

Copies of *Learning and Growing through Evaluation: State Asthma Program Evaluation Guide* can be viewed or downloaded at http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/program_eval/guide.htm.

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1 International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *Ann Intern Med* 1988; 108:258–265.

Introduction and Overview

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Asthma Control Program and state asthma programs across the country are mobilizing their resources to reduce the burden of asthma in our communities. The sound evaluation practices detailed in *Learning and Growing through Evaluation* can help ensure that we use those resources effectively and efficiently; that we have a means of demonstrating the value of our programs; and that we are developing a body of knowledge that tells us “what works.”

Learning and Growing is an evaluation guide intended for use by state and territorial public health departments (SHDs) that are receiving CDC funding for state asthma programs. Other groups that focus on improving asthma management practices, whether or not they receive CDC funding, may also find elements of the guide useful in designing and implementing their own program evaluation activities.

CDC’s approach to public health program evaluation takes into account the great variety among state programs, offering a framework that can be tailored to specific programs. As diverse as the state programs are, all share common aspirations with each other and with CDC’s Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Branch (APRHB). These include:

- People with asthma have better control of their disease and better quality of life
- Comprehensive asthma control services are expanded and sustained statewide
- The state has fewer disparities in asthma care/management and health outcomes
- States develop and use practice-based evidence about effective approaches to asthma control

As its title suggests, this guide focuses on *learning* together how we can reach our goals and on *growing* in our capacity to systematically examine, or evaluate, our efforts.

Organization of the Guide

The guide is comprised of multiple modules that provide an overview of the *CDC Framework for Evaluating Public Health Programs* (MMWR, 1999) as applied to asthma programs. Fundamental to CDC’s approach is an emphasis on generating information or knowledge that will be useful to the many people invested in a program’s success. Whether you are new to program evaluation or have years of experience, becoming familiar with this approach will give us a common vocabulary and support our work together on this cooperative agreement.

The first module applies the CDC Framework to evaluation planning. It addresses both the creation of a strategic evaluation plan, which is designed to prioritize the use of scarce evaluation resources over the life of the cooperative agreement, and also planning sound evaluation strategies for use in evaluating specific program activities. A second module covers methods for

implementing evaluations and is designed to be consulted as needed when considering evaluation strategies and preparing individual evaluation plans. Additional modules focus on evaluating partnerships and surveillance activities, and upcoming modules focus on evaluating interventions and on economic evaluation.

The three-ring binder format has been chosen to permit the addition of supplemental material as you use the guide over time. Pages are numbered consecutively within chapters. Tables and figures are also numbered consecutively within chapters to facilitate cross-referencing. We recommend that you print this document in color, if possible, to take full advantage of its design features. The guide is designed for printing one page to a sheet and double-sided.

Tools and Templates

Throughout the guide you will find a number of templates and checklists that should facilitate your evaluation planning and practice, particularly if you are new to evaluation. They can be easily adapted to the particular context in which your program operates. The examples given are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not meant to promote one particular evaluation question or method over another. By following the planning process outlined in the guide, you will arrive at your own conclusions regarding proposed evaluations. Blank evaluation templates and companion resources are available at http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/program_eval/guide.htm.

CDC is committed to supporting states as they discover and share “what works” in their asthma programs. By learning and growing together through evaluation, we can contribute to America breathing easier.

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