Asthma Cooperative Agreement Partner Profile
PENNSYLVANIA

Accessible link: https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/contacts/asthma-grantee-profile-pa.html

The Pennsylvania Asthma Program has been part of CDC's National Asthma Control Program since 2003. They work alongside partners to improve the quality of asthma care, improve asthma management in schools, and foster policies to help reduce exposure to asthma triggers in outdoor, indoor, and workplace environments.

Strategies in Action

- Duquesne University Center for Integrative Health is working with seven schools across four school districts in Allegheny County to expand access to and delivery of asthma self-management education (AS-ME) through school clinics. All schools served were located within environmental justice areas where asthma prevalence is high and where they may have fewer resources for asthma control. During the 2021–2022 school year, 74 students participated in the clinic's AS-ME. At enrollment, over half of the participants had intermittent asthma, 65% were taking their medication only partially or not at all as prescribed, 8% had at least one emergency department visit, and four had at least one prior hospitalization due to asthma. Of the 61 participants who had an asthma control test at least twice, those with well and poorly controlled asthma at enrollment had improved asthma control at the most recent visit. Those with moderate asthma severity made significant improvement in asthma control at the most recent visit.

- Allentown, located within an environmental justice area, is identified by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America 2021 rankings as the number one asthma capital in the United States. A company was contracted to recruit and provide quality improvement (QI) activities to achieve guidelines-based medical management of asthma to a federally qualified health center (FQHC) in Lehigh County. Lehigh County has one of the highest age-adjusted asthma hospitalization rates in the state. Five sites located in Allentown participate with this FQHC. They serve a patient population that is primarily Spanish-speaking (97%). Identified activities in the QI action plan include initiating a flu vaccine protocol for August and September appointments; using the asthma control test to categorize and measure asthma severity; scheduling timely follow-up appointments after exacerbations, medication changes, and respiratory illnesses; and providers discussing with patients and caregivers the need to increase the frequency of appointments for patients with asthma to maintain asthma control. The electronic health record (EHR) did not have an asthma control test in either English or Spanish; therefore, in February 2023, both English and Spanish versions of the asthma control test were released into the FQHC's EHR system.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
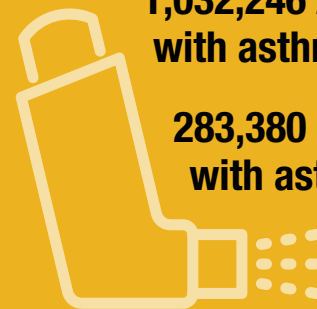Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

PA — Asthma by the Numbers:

2020

1,032,246 Adults with asthma

283,380 Children with asthma

In 2020, a total of 1,032,246 Pennsylvania adults (10.2% of the adult population) had asthma, and 283,380 Pennsylvania children ages 0–17 years (11.5%) had it.

2019

29,062 ER visits

8,568 Hospitalizations

In 2019, Pennsylvania had 29,062 emergency department visits and 8,568 hospitalizations due to asthma.

cdc.gov/asthma

National Asthma Control Program: EXHALE

Education
on asthma self-management

X-tinguishing
smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke

Home
visits for trigger reduction and asthma self-management education

Achievement
of guidelines-based medical management

Linkages
and coordination of care across settings

Environmental
policies or best practices to reduce asthma triggers from indoor, outdoor, or occupational sources

CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) and its partners help people with asthma achieve better health and improved quality of life. NACP developed EXHALE, a set of six public health strategies that each contribute to better asthma control.

Each EXHALE strategy has been proven to reduce asthma-related hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and healthcare costs. Using the EXHALE strategies together in a community can have the greatest impact.