

BREATHING EASIER *in* WISCONSIN



SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE WISCONSIN ASTHMA PROGRAM



“A number of different facets have to come together to see improvement in asthma management and get people on the right track. Without (CDC) funds, much of what we do would not occur.”

CRISTINE RAMEKER

program manager
WISCONSIN'S ASTHMA PROGRAM

THE PROBLEMS:

- Lifetime asthma prevalence among Wisconsin adults increased from more than 10 percent in 2000 to more than 13 percent in 2009.
- In 2009, almost 10 percent of Wisconsin children had been diagnosed with asthma in their lifetimes and nearly 7 percent were living with the chronic respiratory disease.
- A quarter of adults with asthma were unable to carry out regular tasks in the past month because of asthma, and about half of children with asthma missed one or more school days in the last year due to the disease.
- In 2009, about 21,000 asthma-related ER visits cost more than \$23 million.



THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

Wisconsin's Asthma Program and its partners focus on communities with the greatest needs. They increase asthma awareness, educate people on how to avoid environmental asthma triggers, partner with community stakeholders, and help residents manage their own health. And their efforts are paying off.

- The nearly 300-member Wisconsin Asthma Coalition, which is funded via the state asthma program, partners with pharmacists to help patients stay in control of their asthma. The Asthma Care Fax program empowers pharmacists to alert primary care providers if their patients are overusing asthma rescue medication, a sign of uncontrolled asthma. By partnering with pharmacists and providing them with asthma control training, the coalition has created a systematic change to reach residents at high risk of asthma complications.
- The Wisconsin Asthma Program works with the Menominee Tribal Clinic to empower residents with asthma to better manage their health. The community is home to high rates of asthma-related hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Today, with the support of CDC funds, the clinic has a respiratory therapist who provides asthma care and connects patients with healthy home resources. To date, the effort has reached nearly 400 residents living with asthma.
- In 2010, the Wisconsin Asthma Coalition learned that the state Medicaid program did not reimburse for spacers. This device attaches to an asthma inhaler and ensures more of the medication makes it into the user's lungs. In response, the coalition partnered with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin to examine whether providing spacers to patients would help reduce the high costs of uncontrolled asthma. The partnership provided the information needed to help the state Medicaid program begin to reimburse for spacers. The effort was a success and the policy changed.
- In Wisconsin, asthma costs millions of health care dollars and many of these costs are preventable. Data show that even as asthma prevalence is going up in Wisconsin, asthma-related emergency room visits and hospitalizations have declined. That decline coincides with the ramp up of Wisconsin's asthma control activities.

All information and data provided by
the Wisconsin Department of Health
Services Asthma Program

CDC's National Asthma Control Program

Wisconsin 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.

