

# BREATHING EASIER *in*

# UTAH



SUCCESS STORIES  
FROM THE UTAH  
ASTHMA PROGRAM

Although health care is often at the forefront of asthma management, public health plays an important role in convening stakeholders, bringing the issue of asthma to the forefront and identifying additional ways to impact asthma. Utah has numerous partners interested in helping address the issues facing those with asthma. Our CDC funding allows us to bring those partners together — and together work to make our communities better.

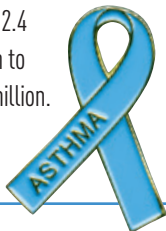
## REBECCA GILES

program manager  
UTAH ASTHMA PROGRAM

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

## THE PROBLEMS:

- As of 2011, 8.6 percent of Utah adults and 6.7 percent of children were living with asthma.
- Among schoolchildren with asthma, nearly 41 percent said they missed at least one day of school in the previous year because of the chronic respiratory disease. Only slightly more than 24 percent of parents of children with asthma said their child had an asthma action plan on file at school.
- Between 2001 and 2010, asthma-related hospitalization costs in Utah more than doubled, from \$7.9 million to \$16.2 million. From 2001 to 2009, asthma-related emergency room costs tripled from \$2.4 million to \$7.3 million.



## THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

The Utah 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.

- The Utah Asthma Program was having trouble reaching health providers with the latest updates in asthma care. In response, the Asthma Telehealth continuing education program was developed and offered to health professionals quarterly. The free series covers a number of wide ranging asthma diagnosis and management issues. Participants can access the series via phone or online. As of mid-2013, more than 1,000 health professionals had participated. Archived presentations had been downloaded more than 27,000 times in the previous 12 months.
- Since 2004, the Utah Asthma Program has trained school faculty and staff on what to do in case of an asthma attack. The asthma program hires interns from local colleges to provide the training in person. Originally the training took an hour, but schools said that was too long. Today, the training takes 15 minutes, comes with plenty of additional resources, and a laminated emergency protocol card for every classroom. From 2004 to 2012, the effort reached more than 7,550 faculty and staff in nearly half of all schools in Utah.
- In partnership with fellow state agencies, parents, school personnel, and other stakeholders, the Utah Asthma Program developed the Recess Guidance for Schools. The resource, which is sent to schools where the Utah Department of Environmental Quality monitors air quality levels, helps schools decide when recess and other outdoor activities should be canceled or limited due to poor air quality. The guidance is coupled with a website where school personnel can check the daily air quality index and find resources for keeping students with asthma safe and healthy. As needed, urgent air quality messages are sent to more than 240 school personnel. During an evaluation, 84 percent of principals and school staff who received the guidance said they were aware of the resource and used it.
- In Utah, 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

Utah 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).

