



# Addressing Asthma

CDC's Division of Adolescent & School Health



## Mission

The mission of the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) is to prevent the most serious health risks among children, adolescents, and young adults.

## Goal

To increase the number of asthma-friendly schools nationwide. Asthma-friendly schools adopt policies and procedures and coordinate student services to better serve students with asthma.

## Strategies

- 1 Data collection and analysis.
- 2 Science-based guidance.
- 3 Funding to state and local departments of education and national nongovernmental organizations for program and policy development.
- 4 Evaluation.
- 5 Integration with other federal efforts.

## 1 Data Collection and Analysis

### Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

The YRBSS consists of national, state, and large urban school district surveys of representative samples of high school students. Conducted every two years, these surveys monitor health-risk behaviors among young people so that health and education agencies can more effectively target and improve programs. These behaviors, often established during childhood and early adolescence, include tobacco use; unhealthy dietary choices; inadequate physical activity; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that can lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, including HIV infection; and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.

Data collected on asthma include the percentage of high school students who were ever told by a doctor or nurse that they have asthma and the percentage who reported that they currently have asthma.

[www.cdc.gov/YRBS](http://www.cdc.gov/YRBS)

### School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS)

Conducted every six years, SHPPS is the most comprehensive study of U.S. school health policies and programs. SHPPS assesses the characteristics of school health policies and programs at the state, district, school, and classroom levels nationwide across all eight school health program components: health education; physical education and activity; health services; mental health and social services; nutrition services; healthy and safe school environment; faculty and staff health

### Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP)

A CSHP consists of eight interrelated components: health education; physical education; health services; nutrition services; counseling, psychological, and social services; healthy and safe school environments; health promotion for staff members; and family and community involvement. CSHPs focus on improving the quality of each of these components and expanding collaboration among the people responsible for them. This coordination results in a planned, organized, and comprehensive set of courses, services, policies, and interventions that meet the health and safety needs of all students from kindergarten through grade 12. Effective CSHPs can increase the adoption of health-enhancing behaviors, improve student and staff health, and use resources more efficiently.

promotion; and family and community involvement.

SHPPS monitors asthma management policies and practices including

- Asthma action plans for students with asthma.
- Permitting students with asthma to carry and self-administer a quick-relief prescription inhaler.
- Staff development on identification or school-based management of chronic health conditions such as asthma.
- Case management for students with chronic health conditions such as asthma.
- Availability of peak-flow meters, nebulizers, and albuterol inhalers for use by students who may need this equipment.
- Availability of a full-time school nurse.

[www.cdc.gov/SHPPS](http://www.cdc.gov/SHPPS)



## School Health Profiles (Profiles)

Profiles, a biennial survey conducted by state and local education and health agencies, provides data on school health policies and practices in states and large urban school districts. It monitors and assesses characteristics of, and trends in, health and physical education and activity, tobacco-use prevention policies, nutrition-related policies and practices, health services, collaboration, and family and community involvement in school health programs. States and large urban school districts use Profiles data to plan and allocate resources, guide professional development, advocate for policy improvement and resources, and describe the status of school health programs in their jurisdictions.

Data collected in Profiles include the percentages of schools in participating states and large urban school districts that implement school-based asthma management and education activities, such as

- Permitting students with asthma to carry and self-administer asthma medications.
- Having a school nurse.
- Having an asthma action plan for all students with asthma.
- Increasing student knowledge about asthma.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Profiles](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Profiles)

## Healthy Passages

Healthy Passages is a multi-year study that follows a group of fifth-grade students through age 20 to improve our understanding of what factors help keep children healthy. The results will provide information that can be used to develop effective policies and programs to improve the health and development of children, adolescents, and adults. Healthy Passages collects data on diagnosis of asthma, as well as data on tobacco and substance use, physical activity, diet, physical and mental health, injuries and violence, sexual behavior, family and peer relationships, and media exposure.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/HealthyPassages](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/HealthyPassages)

## 2 Science-Based Guidance

### Strategies for Addressing Asthma Within a Coordinated School Health Program

Asthma-friendly schools have policies and procedures that allow students to successfully manage their asthma at school. DASH developed strategies for addressing asthma in a CSHP on the basis of an extensive review of research, theory, and current practice in school-based asthma management, health education, and public health. The strategies are as follows

- Establish management and support systems for asthma-friendly schools.
- Provide appropriate school health and mental health services for students with asthma.
- Provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and school staff.
- Provide a safe and healthy school environment to reduce asthma triggers.
- Provide opportunities for safe, enjoyable physical education and other activities for students with asthma.
- Coordinate school, family, and community efforts to better manage asthma symptoms and reduce school absences among students with asthma.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/strategies.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/strategies.htm)

### School Health Index (SHI): A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide

The *SHI* helps schools implement evidence-based policies and practices that promote school-based asthma management and education and other healthy behaviors. *SHI* provides tools and resources to assist stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, students, and community members) in assessing health policies and programs and developing an improvement plan based on assessment results. Both print and interactive online versions of *SHI* are available.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI)

### *Managing Asthma in Schools—What Have We Learned?* Special issue of the *Journal of School Health*

CDC and the National, Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute supported and edited *Managing Asthma in Schools—What Have We Learned?* a special issue of the *Journal of School Health*. This issue provides information on developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based asthma programs. It features more than 25 research articles, brief reports, and case studies covering a range of activities. These activities include asthma education programs for students and staff members, asthma-related health services, and policy changes. The publication also contains a list of resources for school-based asthma programs.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/JOSH](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/JOSH)

### *Resources for Addressing Asthma in Schools*

This publication provides a list of resources and Websites that support the implementation of asthma-friendly school programs. The list includes resources from CDC, other state and federal agencies, and private organizations.

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/pdf/pubs-links.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/pdf/pubs-links.pdf)





## Funding to State and Local Departments of Education and National Nongovernmental Organizations for Program and Policy Development

### State and Local Programs to Reduce Asthma Episodes and Asthma-Related Absences

DASH supports efforts to reduce asthma episodes and asthma-related absences through Coordinated School Health Programs (CSHPs) by providing technical assistance and financial support to one state and seven local education agencies. As a result of this assistance, state and local education agencies are able to

- Implement effective policies, environmental changes, and educational strategies for preventing and reducing asthma episodes and absences among students with asthma.
- Implement strategies for reducing disparities among populations that may be disproportionately affected by asthma.
- Communicate successful and effective interventions for adoption by other education and health agencies, school districts, schools, and communities.

### National Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) Programs to Address School-based Asthma Management

National NGOs support state and local education and health agencies in addressing school-based asthma management and education. NGOs can effectively reach target audiences with resources, guidance, training, and technical assistance to implement and improve school-based asthma management and education

programs, policies, and practices. Through extensive coordination and collaboration, NGOs promote better health for all students and put research findings into action to support healthier youth.

DASH funds national NGOs to

- Assess needs for training, technical assistance, materials, and other resources.
- Build capacity of other funded partners and constituents through training and technical assistance efforts.
- Identify, develop, and disseminate model strategies, guidelines, program materials, and other resources.
- Assist constituents and other funded partners in developing partnerships.
- Encourage constituents and other funded partners to collaborate with state departments of education and health and community-based organizations.

For example, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) developed two tools for school principals and superintendents to demonstrate the importance of addressing asthma in schools and districts. AASA focused an issue of *Governance and Leadership*, the organization's professional journal, on school asthma

[http://aasa.org/files/PDFs/Publications/Spring\\_20031.pdf](http://aasa.org/files/PDFs/Publications/Spring_20031.pdf)

AASA also produced *Powerful Practices: A Checklist for School Districts Addressing the Needs of Students with Asthma* and pilot-tested it in school districts around the country.

<http://aasa.files.cms-plus.com/PDFs/Focus/AASA%20Powerful%20Practices%20in%20Asthma%20Management.pdf>

The American Lung Association (ALA) developed, pilot-tested, evaluated, and implemented an *Asthma-Friendly Schools Toolkit*. The toolkit provides in-depth guidance and resources for implementing CDC's *Strategies for Addressing Asthma Within a Coordinated School Health Program*. This guide can also be used to build the capacity

of local ALA chapters and asthma coalitions to support asthma programs in schools.

[www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK900E&b=22590#toolkit](http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK900E&b=22590#toolkit)

The National Association of State Boards of Education produced two documents supporting policy development and implementation at the state level: *Issue Brief: Summary and Analyses of State Policies on Asthma Education, Medications, and Triggers*; and *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide, Part III: Policies on Asthma, School Health Services and Health Environments*.

[www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fithealthy.html](http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fithealthy.html)

[www.nasbe.org/healthy\\_schools/publications/IB\\_Asthma\\_07.05.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/publications/IB_Asthma_07.05.pdf)



## Evaluation

### Technical Assistance

DASH provides evaluation support to its funded partners through individual technical assistance and professional development. Technical assistance increases the capacity of funded partners to evaluate and improve their programs by describing their program using a logic model, developing SMART objectives, and documenting what happened in their program by maintaining accurate and organized records on program activities and designating a person responsible for process evaluation data.

### Program Evaluation

To help identify effective new approaches for promoting the health of young people, DASH provides technical assistance to state and local agencies to evaluate innovative policies and programs. For example, DASH is working with Albuquerque Public Schools to examine barriers and facilitators to implementing comprehensive school asthma program in every elementary school in the district.

## 5 Integration with Other Federal Efforts

DASH collaborates closely with CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), other CDC partners, and other federal agencies to address issues related to asthma management and education.

- DASH and NCEH staff work together to establish and provide science-based guidance on addressing asthma management activities in school settings.
- DASH and Steps to a HealthierUS staff members collaborate to provide technical assistance and guidance to 40 communities that receive Steps funding to support evidence-based school interventions that address obesity, diabetes, asthma, tobacco use, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity.

- DASH staff members work closely with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in several capacities: serving on its National Coordinating Committee and School Education Subcommittee for the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, serving on its Federal Liaison Group on Asthma, and participating in the development of school-related publications.

For additional information, contact DASH

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