

ASTHMA PLANNING AND EDUCATION TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Minnesota is one of six states funded for full implementation of its state asthma plan

Public Health Problem

- Asthma causes missed days from school and work, interrupts sleep, and limits physical activity.
- Fifteen percent of Minnesota adults with asthma visited an emergency room or urgent care center at least once in a year because of their asthma – an indication of poor control.
- The Minnesota state asthma plan identifies health care providers, school personnel and coaches as essential to efforts to educate children and adults with asthma to control their asthma and reduce costly hospitalizations.

Program

- The Minnesota Department of Health Asthma Program is one of six programs funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for full implementation of its state plan to address asthma as an emerging public health problem. Many stakeholders developed the plan and the Program established an asthma surveillance system.
- The Program also created the first interactive asthma action plan. Providers use the action plan to determine asthma severity level and prepare individual asthma action plans to prevent development of severe symptoms and reduce the need for emergency room visits or hospitalizations for adults and children with asthma (www.mnasthma.org/aap/).
- The Program developed a manual and trained school personnel. These trained staff then collectively reached thousands of students with asthma to help with asthma control. Training reached over 900 people from about two thirds of state school districts.
- Working with the Utah Department of Health, the Asthma Program also developed an online training for coaches called *Winning with Asthma*, targeting physical education teachers and coaches, groups not generally thought of as public health partners, to help them with management of student asthma episodes (www.WinningWithAsthma.org).

Impact

- The trainings significantly improved the asthma knowledge of school personnel and resulted in changes such as developing standardized procedures and working on inhaler techniques.
- The interactive asthma action plan is one of ten web sites recommended by the American Thoracic Society for asthma action plans and is used by many practitioners, several clinics, and by medical students during residency.
- Feedback from coaches indicates they have utilized what they've learned and are seeing improved performance from athletes with asthma. Coaches from several states have completed the training and some asthma coalitions are promoting it to coaches in their states or regions.

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