

BREATHING EASIER *in*

# WASHINGTON



SUCCESS STORIES FROM  
THE WASHINGTON  
BREATHING PROGRAM

Asthma is one of the most common chronic conditions of children in Washington. Reducing or eliminating CDC funding will increase the costs and other burdens asthma places on children, their parents and society.

## KEITH ZANG

program manager

WASHINGTON'S ASTHMA

CONTROL PROGRAM

### THE PROBLEMS:

- More than 9 percent of Washington adults and 8 percent of children have asthma.
- Asthma is one of the leading causes of hospitalization for children younger than 15 years old, and about 5 percent of high school students living with the chronic respiratory disease report missing five or more days of school because of asthma.
- Residents with poorly controlled asthma are more likely to be unable to afford medication or doctor visits.
- In 2007, asthma-related hospital costs topped \$48 million. In 2002, the total cost of asthma in Washington was estimated at \$406 million.

### THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO ASTHMA:

Washington'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.

- In 2010, the Asthma Program trained about 75 school nurses and health educators on creating supportive school environments for students with asthma. The training promotes asthma-friendly policies, calls for every student with asthma to have an asthma action plan on file, and encourages parental involvement.
- The Washington Asthma Program helps to empower residents with the knowledge and tools to better manage their asthma. Together with local and tribal partners, the Asthma Program had developed a three visit protocol that is being piloted through one county health department and two tribal clinic systems. The visits are performed by a local health care worker or community volunteer. The visits focus on medication education, trigger identification and elimination, and self management education. This team approach to asthma education with inclusion of their primary health care provider helps address coordination of care for better outcomes, as well as reaching those more disparately effected by the disease.
- The Asthma Program is creating partnerships with clinics and health care providers throughout the state to promote quality asthma care as well as patient-centered medical homes, which helps ensure timely, well-organized care for patients. The program is also training doctors and nurses how to reduce the burden of asthma among children and their families.
- In Washington, 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

Washington 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).

