

# Asthma Awareness Month

## Event Planning Kit

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Dear Asthma Awareness Month Partner:

Each May, thousands of organizations join together for Asthma Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the asthma epidemic and to take action to get asthma under control in communities across the nation. Asthma affects more than 23 million people of all ages and races. And, though asthma is widespread, public awareness of common asthma triggers and effective asthma management strategies remains limited.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed this Event Planning Kit to equip state and local asthma programs to hold community-based asthma awareness and action events during Asthma Awareness Month. Inside you will find ideas and helpful tips for planning and running powerful community asthma events in schools, hospitals, clinics, and state capitols. You will also find sample materials and a resource order form to help prepare for your events. We value your feedback on the usefulness of the enclosed materials and welcome any suggestions for future materials.

Hundreds of asthma awareness events will take place across the United States this May. EPA can help publicize your event on **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org** – our national asthma community’s online network. Submit your event online at <http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/events> and it will be listed.

Also, in the spirit of Asthma Awareness Month, please consider becoming part of a growing network of community programs committed to improving the lives of people with asthma by joining **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org**. As a member of this network you will have access to the latest resources and tools to help you build, sustain and spread your asthma program. Join today and begin interacting with others who, like you, are leading the nation in the delivery of quality asthma care.

On behalf of EPA, I would like to thank you for working to increase asthma awareness and action in your community and for sponsoring an Asthma Awareness Month event. We look forward to assisting you with planning your asthma education events and hearing about your success! Working together, we can help communities take control of asthma.

Sincerely,

Kim Durkin

Asthma Awareness Month Coordinator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



# Asthma Awareness Activities

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for your community.

### Things to do include:

- ▶ Hold an asthma awareness event that is open to the public with elected officials and local celebrities. Ask your governor or mayor to issue an Asthma Awareness Month proclamation (see template on page 12). Have an EPA representative, health official or community health worker make a brief presentation on asthma and highlight your organization's efforts to combat the disease. Issue a press release announcing the event (see template on page 9).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event in your area or state capitol. Use **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org** to connect and collaborate with local health care professionals and community organizations in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- ▶ Find out if any local leaders or celebrities have asthma and ask them to participate in your event.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational materials at local houses of worship and/or sporting events (e.g., baseball, soccer).
- ▶ Ask local television and radio stations to include the National Childhood Asthma Media Campaign public service announcements (PSAs) in their programming. Visit **www.epapsa.com** for more information on the PSAs, developed in partnership between the EPA and the Ad Council.
- ▶ Schedule local TV and radio interviews to talk about asthma and your organization's programs to educate the public on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the exacerbation of asthma.
- ▶ Schedule an asthma event and post it on the calendar of events on **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org**. Or broadcast it on social media websites like Twitter and Facebook. Just set up an account and spread the word!
- ▶ Contact area health insurers and managed care organizations to promote asthma education (see page 7 for a list of possible activities).
- ▶ Contact the **National Association of School Nurses** or the **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)** to arrange professional educational seminars, such as AAFA's "Asthma Management and Education Program," for health professionals.
- ▶ Introduce local schools to the **Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools** Action Kit to help protect all children from asthma triggers. For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>.
- ▶ Contact state or local education associations for support in sponsoring asthma awareness activities in your local schools.
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma walkathon. Invite local partners, community health workers, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies to provide asthma educational displays and materials.



# Ideas for Asthma Awareness Activities *(continued)*

## Event Spotlight

### The Asthma Management Puzzle – Putting the Pieces Together

**Where did the event take place?**  
Kohl's Parking Lot in Evans, Ga.

#### What happened?

The Asthma Management Puzzle – Putting the Pieces Together event provided free asthma control testing, pulmonary functions testing, asthma kits and educational resources. Doctors, asthma educators and respiratory therapists helped with testing and education. Fun events for children, such as inflatables and a rock climbing wall, kept children entertained while parents received educational material.

#### What resources were used?

Pamphlets about asthma awareness and management from EPA and Merck Childhood Asthma Network asthma programs, asthma kits that contained a holding chamber and peak flow meter and additional educational materials were given out to increase public awareness about asthma.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

Over 150 participants and 200 visitors learned about asthma. Additionally, 100 asthma kits and 90 pulmonary function tests were distributed.

- ▶ Start a forum discussion about your event on **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org** and encourage other members to attend and promote it through their communication channels.
- ▶ Contact area university medical schools and/or allied health programs such as nursing, respiratory therapy or pharmacy to get their students involved in your event.
- ▶ Hold an asthma health fair offering free pulmonary screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Ask local partners, community health workers, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies to provide educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Ask local hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices and pharmacies to display and distribute asthma educational materials.
- ▶ Ask local community health workers to attend your event to provide their insights on the value of asthma awareness and management.
- ▶ Invite people to attend your event by using social media websites like Twitter and Facebook.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational brochures at public libraries, community centers or other popular places.
- ▶ Ask local chapters of health professional organizations (i.e., respiratory therapists, nurses, pulmonologists and pediatricians) to include articles in their newsletters on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development and exacerbation of asthma, and encourage them to incorporate environmental control in their patients' asthma management plans.

## Communities in Action

### Join AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org Now

Members have real-time access to other registered programs and their cutting-edge resources and tools. They also help each other achieve remarkable health and quality of life improvements for people with asthma. In addition to receiving a monthly newsletter, members can:

- ▶ Learn from and network with **asthma programs nationwide**.
- ▶ Post and find **local, regional and national events**.
- ▶ **Team with mentors** to assist with program activities.
- ▶ Access items like the **blogs, resources, webinars, podcasts and videos** and the **Asthma Change Package**.



# Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, especially management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, parents and students at a local school or library. To do this, you will need the support of the school or district administration, school nurse, children's librarian and other key staff.

### Things to do include:

- ▶ **Plan asthma educational activities at your school or library:**
  - ▶ Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management during in-service days for teachers, custodians and other school staff.
  - ▶ Offer asthma education for parents at local PTA/PTO meetings or other similar events.
  - ▶ Read children's books on asthma to students, such as *Taking Asthma to School*, *Zoo Allergy*, and *The ABC's of Asthma*, by Kim Gosselin.
  - ▶ Arrange a school-wide assembly with guest speakers, such as kids with asthma, local celebrities, doctors or elected officials.
  - ▶ Organize an asthma poster contest for children.
  - ▶ Coordinate with the **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)** to launch a *Power Breathing* Program for middle and high school students with asthma.
  - ▶ Design asthma awareness bulletin boards or other displays for students and staff.
  - ▶ Encourage teachers to incorporate asthma and the environment into appropriate lesson plans, e.g., science and health.
  - ▶ Include asthma awareness information in school newsletters and other packets sent home to parents/ guardians.
  - ▶ Sponsor a staff breakfast or lunch and introduce the **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools** Action Kit.
  - ▶ Conduct a walkthrough of your school to determine if asthma triggers exist. If triggers are found, develop and implement a remediation plan as soon as possible. See the **IAQ Tools for Schools** Action Kit for assistance.

- ▶ Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the **American Lung Association** or **AAFA**—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.
- ▶ Publicize your event(s) and Asthma Awareness Month on the school bulletin board or Web site, in the school newsletter, in state and local education association newsletters, flyers, PTA announcements, local media and social media websites like [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org), Twitter and Facebook.



## Event Spotlight

### Asthma Awareness Summit and Fair at James H. Law Elementary School

#### Where did the event take place?

James H. Law Elementary School in Houston, Tx.

#### What happened?

The Asthma Awareness Summit and Fair at James H. Law Elementary School celebrated Asthma Awareness Month by providing the community with information on asthma and live demonstrations of asthma inhalers and spacers.

#### What resources were used?

An asthma video, handouts about asthma, pamphlets on mold in homes, home checklists for asthma triggers, asthma brochures from the CDC, plus giveaways including water bottles, booklets, coloring books and bookmarks were available to help promote asthma awareness.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The event was open to all asthma students, parents and staff at James H. Law Elementary School. About 40 people attended and received asthma information.

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

- ▶ **Asthma educational materials are available for students, teachers, nurses, school officials, parents and the community. EPA materials are free!**
  - ▶ “Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers” video – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure – available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean
  - ▶ “Dusty and His Asthma Triggers” children’s funbook – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma” – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Managing Asthma in the School Environment” – available in English
  - ▶ Breathe Easies PSA Campaign – available at <http://www.noattacks.org/breathe-easies> – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ NoAttacks.org, <http://www.noattacks.org/>, developed in partnership between EPA and the Ad Council – available in English and Spanish

## Ten Ways to Manage Asthma in the School Environment

- 1 Use the IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit**
  - ▶ Improve the school environment with effective approaches recommended in this Action Kit. To order the free Action Kit, go to <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools>.
- 2 Control Animal Allergens**
  - ▶ Remove warm-blooded animals from the classroom and school.
- 3 Control Cockroach Allergens**
  - ▶ Use integrated pest management practices to prevent cockroach and other pest problems (e.g., store food in tightly sealed containers and place dumpsters away from the building).
- 4 Clean Up Mold and Control Moisture**
  - ▶ Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
  - ▶ Clean up hard, moldy surfaces with water and detergent, and then dry thoroughly.
- 5 Eliminate Secondhand Smoke Exposure**
  - ▶ Enforce comprehensive, tobacco-free schools policies.
- 6 Reduce Dust Mite Exposure**
  - ▶ Make sure the school is dusted and vacuumed thoroughly and regularly.
- 7 Develop an Asthma Management Plan**
  - ▶ Include school policies on inhaler and other medication usage and emergency procedures for school staff to follow for asthma attacks.
  - ▶ Make sure students with asthma obtain and turn in copies of their Asthma Action Cards to teachers, the school nurse, etc.
- 8 Provide School-Based Asthma Education Programs**
  - ▶ Encourage students to identify and manage their asthma triggers.
  - ▶ Obtain the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program’s Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>.
- 9 Reduce School Bus Diesel Exhaust**
  - ▶ Replace the oldest buses in the fleet with new ones, and install effective emission control systems on newer buses.
  - ▶ Encourage policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling.
  - ▶ Visit <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus> to learn more about EPA’s Clean School Bus USA Program.
- 10 Gather Additional Asthma Resources**
  - ▶ Establish a complete file on existing asthma and allergy-related information sources to reference throughout the school year.
  - ▶ Ask the **National Association of School Nurses** to offer their course, Managing Asthma Triggers, to nurses in your district. <http://www.nasn.org>
  - ▶ Visit the **AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org** Resource Bank to find additional publications that can help you raise awareness on asthma.



# Plan an Asthma Education Event at a Local Clinic or Hospital

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, patients and the public at a local hospital or clinic. To do this, you will need the support of hospital or clinic management and key staff.

### Things to do include:

- ▶ Conduct asthma educational trainings and coordinate activities at the local hospital or clinic:
  - ▶ Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management.
  - ▶ Incorporate asthma into health fairs.
  - ▶ Educate parents on asthma and the risks of secondhand smoke.
  - ▶ Provide guest speakers—such as asthma patients, doctors, nurses or local celebrities—to describe how to live with asthma.
- ▶ Download the **National Environmental Education Foundation's** “Environmental Management of Pediatric Asthma: Guidelines for Health Care Providers” and related training materials at <https://www.neefusa.org/health/asthma> to train health care providers.
- ▶ Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the **American Lung Association**—that may assist in asthma events or trainings. Use [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org) to connect with possible sponsors.
- ▶ Contact the **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America** about conducting an “Asthma Management and Education” training for health professionals who educate and care for patients with asthma.
- ▶ Learn about additional training opportunities for community health workers by visiting [http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/chw\\_programs](http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/chw_programs)
- ▶ Contact the **American Association for Respiratory Care** to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM continuing education course for respiratory therapists.
- ▶ Issue press releases and publicize your event in newsletters, patient information packets and on social media websites like [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org), Twitter and Facebook. Or schedule a press conference with local media.

### And remember...

- ▶ Distribute asthma materials to patients, hospital or clinic staff, and families with asthma prescriptions. Here are some free asthma education resources:
  - ▶ “Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers” video – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure – available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese or Korean
  - ▶ “Dusty and His Asthma Triggers” children’s funbook – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma” – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ “Managing Asthma in the School Environment” – available in English
  - ▶ Breathe Easies PSA Campaign – available at <http://www.noattacks.org/breathe-easies> – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ NoAttacks.org, <http://www.noattacks.org/>, developed in partnership between EPA and the Ad Council – available in English and Spanish



## Event Spotlight

### Frederick Memorial Healthcare System’s Asthma Awareness Day

#### Where did the event take place?

Francis Scott Key Mall in Frederick, Md.

#### What happened?

Representatives handed out materials about environmental asthma triggers, strategies for identifying and managing asthma triggers, assessments of allergen exposures and sensitivity, self management skills and smoking cessation at the mall. They also had a mayoral proclamation and asthma presentations to share with the public.

#### What resources were used?

Asthma diagrams, educational brochures on asthma and asthma triggers, asthma action plans, information on medication and how to use asthma inhalers and spacers, and giveaways including pencils, cups and magnets were given out at the event.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The mayor gave a proclamation about asthma to approximately 300 people who attended the Asthma Awareness Day event.

# Asthma Education Events

## for Health Insurers and Managed Care Organizations

### May is Asthma Awareness Month!

Asthma Awareness Month provides an excellent opportunity to promote the value of asthma management and preventive asthma services, including management of asthma triggers. Engage and collaborate with health insurers and managed care organizations in your community.

#### Things to do include:

- ▶ Place an article in a newsletter or e-bulletin to educate patients about asthma, environmental triggers and ways to manage asthma.
- ▶ Distribute asthma materials to providers (hospitals, specialists and physicians) to educate them about comprehensive asthma management for patients. In addition, co-sponsor a one-day training for providers with a local chapter of the **American Lung Association** or **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America**.
- ▶ Contact the **American Association for Respiratory Care** to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM for continuing education of respiratory therapists in your network.
- ▶ Host a health fair in a community setting, such as a hospital or clinic. Distribute information about asthma management and methods to identify and mitigate indoor environmental triggers. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Examples of donated materials include items helpful in mitigating indoor environmental triggers, such as pillow or mattress covers, or HEPA filters for vacuums.
- ▶ Encourage hospitals and physicians to run EPA asthma education, videos and public service campaigns on closed circuit television in patient waiting rooms.
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event in a local school setting and educate students, teachers and faculty about ways to manage asthma in the school environment. Distribute asthma action plans to school nurses and students.
- ▶ Honor outstanding providers in your network with an “Asthma Award of the Year” for demonstrating excellent leadership in comprehensively managing patient asthma and increasing asthma awareness with patients.
- ▶ Conduct an in-home environmental assessment in select homes in locations with a high prevalence of asthma. Display these homes as models to showcase the importance of managing indoor environmental triggers.
- ▶ Visit <http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/resources/valueproposition> to learn how to effectively talk about your program’s value to potential funders and your community by creating a value proposition.
- ▶ Review examples of billing codes for reimbursable services to see what is covered across different states. <http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/resources/valueproposition/medicaid-reimbursement-by-state>
- ▶ Join AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org and become part of a growing network of community programs committed to improving the lives of people with asthma.

#### And remember...

- ▶ Asthma educational materials are available in English, Spanish and additional languages for your event (see page 5). In addition, view the following online resources:
  - ▶ “Asthma Home Environment Checklist” – available at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/home\\_environment\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/home_environment_checklist.pdf)
  - ▶ “Implementing an Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps to Help Health Plans Get Started” brochure – available at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/implementing\\_an\\_asthma\\_home\\_visit\\_program.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/implementing_an_asthma_home_visit_program.pdf)
  - ▶ Learn key strategies and best practices for reducing the impact of asthma, especially in underserved communities, by checking out the “Podcast Series: Asthma Community Network – Conversations for Advancing Action” (<http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/podcasts>).



# Plan an Asthma Education Event at Your State Capitol

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event in your state's capitol building. To do this, you will need the support of government officials and local communities.

### Things to do include:

- ▶ Contact your state legislator to sponsor your event. His/her office can help you obtain space in the state capitol building. You will most likely be asked to coordinate details with the capitol's operations office.
- ▶ Sponsor education activities in the state capitol building. Rally local member organizations through [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org) in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- ▶ Issue an asthma proclamation (see sample on page 9).
- ▶ Plan a health fair providing free asthma screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or funding to support the health fair and assist in setting up asthma screenings. Potential sponsors include area doctors, respiratory care departments, businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- ▶ Hold a press conference to announce the state's partnership and to encourage others to get involved.
- ▶ Issue press releases and publicize your event in local newsletters, on the state's website, [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org), social media websites, and through local media.
- ▶ Work with the state's press office to set up interviews with experts in the field, people who have asthma, and government officials. The press office can also set up meetings for state officials and local organizations to visit schools and daycare facilities to promote asthma management.
- ▶ Remember to plan your event well in advance to address any security concerns.

## Event Spotlight

### Pennsylvania Asthma Partnerships Education at the Capitol

#### Where did the event take place?

Harrisburg Capitol Building in Harrisburg, Pa.

#### What happened?

The event educated state legislators about asthma. Asthma information was hand-delivered to each legislator and read aloud in both the House and Senate.

#### What resources were used?

One page fact sheets of statistics on asthma, the environment, and asthma disparities were provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health for Pennsylvania Asthma Partnerships' distribution.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

State legislators were made aware of the overall status of asthma so that they would be prepared with asthma facts and be able to vote on asthma-related legislation in an informed manner.

### And remember...

- ▶ Distribute asthma materials to anyone who is interested. Here are some free education resources:
  - ▶ "Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers" video – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure – available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese or Korean
  - ▶ "Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" children's funbook – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ "Managing Asthma in the School Environment" – available in English
  - ▶ Breathe Easies PSA Campaign – available at <http://www.noattacks.org/breathe-easies> – available in English and Spanish
  - ▶ NoAttacks.org, <http://www.noattacks.org/>, developed in partnership between EPA and the Ad Council – available in English and Spanish





# Sample Proclamation

## From a Local Official

Enlist a well-known local official to issue a proclamation supporting events and activities during Asthma Awareness Month. Below is a sample proclamation that can serve as a guide.

YOUR CITY, COUNTY OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S, MAYOR'S, GOVERNOR'S]  
 PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH  
 IN [COUNTY, CITY OR STATE]

WHEREAS, asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States, affecting an estimated 23 million people; **[INSERT STATE PREVALENCE]**

WHEREAS, asthma is one of the leading causes of childhood hospitalizations, long-term illness, and school absenteeism, accounting for nearly 10.5 million missed school days each year;

WHEREAS, each year nearly 2 million people are rushed to the emergency room from asthma;

WHEREAS, asthma is a long-term, inflammatory disease in which the airways of the lungs constrict, causing wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing;

WHEREAS, exposure to allergens and irritants such as dust mites, mold, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke can bring on an asthma episode;

WHEREAS, secondhand smoke worsens children's asthma in up to one million children;

WHEREAS, there are simple steps people can take to reduce their exposure to environmental asthma triggers;

WHEREAS, **[your organization]** and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are encouraging Americans to identify and reduce their exposures to environmental triggers in homes and schools, and incorporate environmental controls into their asthma management plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **[name]**, **[title]** of **[county, city or state]** do hereby proclaim:

May **[Year]**  
 Asthma Awareness Month  
 In **[County, City or State]**

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(Signature of Official)

# Media Outreach Tips

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

A successful media outreach approach can increase the success of your event. The following tips will help you capture media attention for your asthma activity, event or program.

### Tell the asthma story

One way to gain the media's attention is to provide facts about the dangers of asthma to public health. Asthma affects more than 23 million people in America and is one of the leading causes of childhood hospitalization.

- ▶ Build successful relationships with the media.
  - ▶ Identify national and local media, taking note of beat reporters. Beat reporters are assigned to a specific area or topic, such as community health or science.
  - ▶ Contact beat reporters and editors to introduce yourself and to establish a point of contact for information.
- ▶ **Start with a good media list.**  
*Make sure it is relevant and accurate.* In choosing whom to approach, it is important to consider who is likely to want to tell your asthma story, as well as whom you would like to do it. You may want to include small newspapers and community newsletters, in addition to major newspapers and television and radio stations.
- ▶ **Contact the right person.**  
 At major newspapers and television and radio stations, it is appropriate to contact the assignment editor. Your local library may have a media guide listing names and addresses of people you may want to contact. Be sure to get your contact's email address. Many reporters prefer to get releases by email rather than hard copy.
- ▶ **Write a good pitch letter.**  
 After you have a targeted list of reporters and editors, you will need to write a pitch letter. The pitch letter alerts editors and reporters to your story and why they should cover asthma issues (see page 11 for tips).



## Sample Media Outlets

- ▶ Local newspapers
- ▶ Health producer at a local news station
- ▶ Radio stations
- ▶ Web staff at a local newspaper or broadcast outlet
- ▶ Parenting magazines
- ▶ Hospital medical newsletters
- ▶ Online bulletin boards for your neighborhood
- ▶ Student newspapers at an elementary, middle, or high school or at a college or university
- ▶ Social media websites and blogs
- ▶ Does your area include Hispanic media? Don't forget to reach out to Spanish-language or other media targeted toward an ethnic or non-English-speaking demographic



- ▶ **Write a press release.**  
 A well-written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising could bring to asthma (see page 13 for a sample press release).
- ▶ **Develop a media kit.**  
 Make it as easy as possible for the media to do their jobs. Provide them with statistical information about asthma from reputable sources and provide simple graphics if you have them. Anything you can do to make it easy for reporters to write a story will help. Put together a media kit with a full range of information about asthma issues, environmental triggers, and the specifics of your asthma event. A media kit can include the following materials:
  - ▶ Pitch letter
  - ▶ Asthma Facts (see page 12)
  - ▶ Press release (see page 13)
  - ▶ Proclamation (see page 9)
  - ▶ Calendar of events
  - ▶ Your contact information
  - ▶ Website addresses, as appropriate

# Media Outreach Tips (continued)

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

### ▶ Follow up.

You've sent your materials out to the reporters and editors on your list and allowed time for them to look over the information. Now it's time to make follow-up calls. During your follow-up calls, you should:

- ▶ Be prepared. Make notes for your calls and be prepared to take notes during the calls. Plan what you are going to say ahead of time and stick to it. Try to anticipate any questions or objections you might hear and have an answer prepared.
- ▶ Be polite and brief. Editors and reporters are usually on a very tight schedule and they will appreciate it if you get right to the point. Identify yourself, tell them why you are calling, and offer to answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ Ask for coverage. After you have confirmed receipt of your letter and answered any questions, ask for coverage of your event.

### ▶ News pegs

Journalists often look for “news pegs,” which make a discussion of a broad issue relevant to the moment and “newsworthy.” When trying to obtain coverage of asthma issues, look for news pegs and point them out to the media when you speak to them. News pegs can be breaking news, or a simple event that brings a story into focus or makes it more timely. Below are some possible asthma-related news pegs that can help frame other media pitches and guide your discussions with reporters.

- ▶ May is Asthma Awareness Month! This “month” is a great reason to promote asthma awareness. World Asthma Day, organized by the **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health,** and the **World Health Organization,** also falls during this time.
- ▶ Discuss the impacts of asthma on your community by sharing hospitalizations and emergency visit statistics and prevention methods through reducing environmental triggers.
- ▶ Any speech, rally, event or meeting can be an opportunity to involve the press.

## Telling Your Asthma Story

### ▶ How to pitch a story

Contacting an editor or producer can seem intimidating, but it is not difficult if you prepare yourself adequately. The most effective way to contact the media with a story idea is through a “pitch letter,” which provides the reporter or media with all the information they need to pursue the story.

### ▶ Use the following tips to write a good pitch letter:

- ▶ Email is often the best way to get your letter in front of the right person. Plan to follow up your email with a timely phone call.
- ▶ Keep it short. Journalists don't have much time to spend each day reading pitches. Begin your pitch with your most compelling information to grab the reader's interest, and explain the story in just a few paragraphs. If you have a news peg (see next section), make it clear at the beginning of the letter.
- ▶ Provide all the information journalists need to cover the story. Make sure your pitch covers the “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” of the story. Include your contact information, list possible sources, and include any relevant background material. If you have written a press release, paste that into the email.
- ▶ If you are pitching a broadcast outlet, remember that they are interested in gathering video footage. Tell them about possible photo-ops or events.

## Event Spotlight

### Asthma Screening and Education Fair

#### Where did the event take place?

Stanley and Clayton Rice Family Center in Saint Louis, Mo.

#### What happened?

The Asthma Screening and Education Fair targeted low-income residents in the North Saint Louis area and provided asthma education and resources that improve asthma outcomes. The purpose of the fair was to stress that asthma is treatable and to explain ways to manage asthma at home and school. Free asthma screenings and information on ways to access medication assistance were also provided.

#### What resources were used?

Prescription assistance information, an asthma action plan, information about triggers, asthma fact sheets, asthma myths and an asthma checklist were distributed to help educate the community about asthma. Giveaways such as asthma videos about inhalers, water bottles, children's T-shirts, pencils, erasers, frisbees, jump ropes and coloring books from EPA were also available.

#### How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The Asthma Screening and Education Fair educated 45 people about how to keep asthma under control.

# Asthma Facts

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

- ▶ **Asthma continues to be a serious public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**
  - ▶ An estimated 23 million people, including over 6 million children, have asthma.<sup>1</sup>
  - ▶ Asthma prevalence is higher among persons with family income below the poverty level.<sup>2</sup>
  - ▶ Over 11 million people reported having an asthma attack in a recent government survey.<sup>1,3</sup>
  - ▶ Asthma accounts for more than 15 million physician office and hospital outpatient department visits,<sup>4,5</sup> and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year.<sup>1,6</sup>
- ▶ **Black Americans continue to have higher rates of asthma emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths than do white Americans:**
  - ▶ The rate of emergency department visits is 330% higher.<sup>1,3</sup>
  - ▶ The hospitalization rate is 220% higher.<sup>1,3</sup>
  - ▶ The asthma death rate is 180% higher.<sup>1,3</sup>
- ▶ **Approximately 3 million Hispanics in the United States and its territories have asthma, and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:**
  - ▶ The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 113% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 50% higher than non-Hispanic black people.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans.<sup>2,3</sup>
- ▶ **Asthma in Children**
  - ▶ Asthma is one of the most common serious chronic diseases of childhood.
  - ▶ Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15.<sup>8</sup>
  - ▶ Approximately one out of every 10 school-aged children has asthma.<sup>9</sup>
  - ▶ 10.5 million school days are missed each year due to asthma.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ **The Cost of Asthma**

The annual economic cost of asthma, including direct medical costs from hospital stays and indirect costs such as lost school and work days, amount to more than \$56 billion annually.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ **Environmental Factors**

Indoor and outdoor environmental factors can trigger asthma attacks: dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke.
- ▶ **Asthma Can be Controlled**

With a plan that includes medical treatment and control of environmental triggers, people with asthma can lead healthy, active lives.

## References

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2. Akinbami, L., et al. Trends in Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use, and Mortality in the United States, 2001-2010 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db94.pdf>
3. National Surveillance of Asthma: United States, 2001-2010 [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_03/sr03\\_035.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_03/sr03_035.pdf)
4. National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2010 Summary Tables [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/namcs\\_summary/2010\\_namcs\\_web\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/namcs_summary/2010_namcs_web_tables.pdf)
5. National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2011 Outpatient Department Summary Tables [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/nhamcs\\_outpatient/2011\\_opd\\_web\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/nhamcs_outpatient/2011_opd_web_tables.pdf)
6. National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2011 Emergency Department Summary Tables [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/nhamcs\\_emergency/2011\\_ed\\_web\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahcd/nhamcs_emergency/2011_ed_web_tables.pdf)
7. Akinbami, L., Moorman, J., and Liu, X., Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use, and Mortality: United States, 2005-2009 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr032.pdf>
8. Hall, M.J., DeFrances, C., Williams, S., Golosinskiy, A., Schwartzman, A. National Hospital Discharge Survey: 2007 Summary <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr029.pdf>
9. Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Children: National Health Interview Survey, 2012 [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_10/sr10\\_258.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_258.pdf)
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (May 2011) Asthma in the U.S. Vital Signs <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/asthma/>



# Press Release Template

This template can be customized to highlight your asthma awareness event. Learn specific information about the number of children with asthma in your state from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma>.

Include this information in your press release.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: [Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

## **[YOUR COMMUNITY] CELEBRATES ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH!**

[PLACE-Release DATE]- In the United States alone, approximately of one out of every 10 school-aged children have asthma, [INSERT LOCAL PREVALENCE] which is one of the most common serious chronic diseases of childhood. In addition, asthma is a leading cause of hospital emergency department visits and school absenteeism [insert your state specific asthma statistics].

In response to these alarming statistics, and in an effort to raise public awareness of the risks faced everyday by an estimated 23 million Americans living with asthma [insert state and/or local prevalence], [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is joining the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to participate in Asthma Awareness Month and World Asthma Day. [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is holding a [NAME OF EVENT] on [DATE] at [LOCATION] in [CITY].

All across the world, events are being held in May as part of Asthma Awareness Month. Join [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and EPA at events nationwide during May. Each event will raise awareness about indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma and ways to prevent asthma episodes.

For more information on EPA's Asthma Program and Asthma Awareness Month, log on to [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma) and [YOUR ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE].

# Asthma Awareness Month

## National Organizations & EPA Regional Contacts

### Asthma Awareness Month National Organizations Contacts

**Allergy and Asthma Network  
Mothers of Asthmatics**  
1-800-878-4403  
<http://www.aanma.org>

**American Academy of Allergy,  
Asthma, and Immunology**  
<http://www.aaaai.org>

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
<http://www.aap.org>

**American Association for  
Respiratory Care**  
<http://www.aarc.org>

**American College of Allergy, Asthma  
and Immunology**  
<http://www.acaai.org>

**American College of CHEST Physicians**  
<http://www.chestnet.org>

**American Lung Association**  
1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)  
<http://www.lungusa.org>

**Asthma and Allergy Foundation  
of America**  
1-800-7-ASTHMA (1-800-727-8462)  
<http://www.aafa.org>

**National Childhood Asthma  
Media Campaign**  
1-866-NO-ATTACKS (1-866-662-8822)  
<http://www.noattacks.org>  
<http://www.epapsa.com>

**Global Initiative for Asthma**  
<http://www.ginasthma.com>

**Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention**  
1-888-232-4636  
<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma>

**National Association of School Nurses**  
1-866-627-6767  
<http://www.nasn.org>

**National Education Association Health  
Information Network**  
<http://www.neahin.org>

**National Asthma Education and  
Prevention Program, National Heart,  
Lung, and Blood Institute**  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index.htm>

**National Environmental  
Education Foundation**  
[www.neefusa.org/health.htm](http://www.neefusa.org/health.htm)

**Environmental Protection Agency**  
<http://www.epa.gov/asthma>

Visit [www.AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](http://www.AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org) to find more organizations working to improve the lives of people with asthma.

### Asthma Awareness Month EPA Regional Contacts

**Region 1 – CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT**  
1-888-372-7341

**Region 2 – NJ, NY, PR, VI**  
1-877-251-4575

**Region 3 – DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV**  
1-800-438-2474

**Region 4 – AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN**  
1-800-241-1754

**Region 5 – IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI**  
1-800-621-8431

**Region 6 – AR, LA, NM, OK, TX**  
1-800-887-6063  
(Available only within region)

**Region 7 – IA, KS, MO, NE**  
1-800-223-0425

**Region 8 – CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY**  
1-800-227-8917  
(Available only within region)

**Region 9 – AS, AZ, CA, GU, HI, NV**  
1-866-372-9378

**Region 10 – AK, ID, OR, WA**  
1-800-424-4372

# Resources Available

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

### EPA Asthma Resources Order Form

EPA provides immediate access to the following asthma educational materials at no cost via website, [www.epa.gov/asthma/publications.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/publications.html). Please note, this list is valid for the 2015 calendar year only. Some materials are available for order in print format (see page 16 to learn more on how to order).



▶ **Asthma Home Environment Checklist**

This checklist guides home visitors in identifying the environmental asthma triggers most commonly found in homes.

▶ Available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/home\\_environment\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/home_environment_checklist.pdf)

▶ EPA 402-F-03-030 (Hard Copy)



▶ **Breathe Easies**

These online educational videos feature the Breathe Easies, a band of puppets who educate kids and caregivers about asthma triggers and how to prevent attacks.

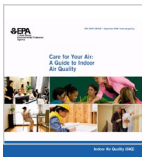
▶ Available for download at <http://www.noattacks.org/breathe-easies> (available in English or Spanish)



▶ **Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers Video**

Featuring conversations with medical professionals and parents of children with asthma, this video presents the role of the environment in triggering and worsening asthma attacks and offers ways to manage asthma to help children lead active, healthy lives.

▶ EPA 402-C-06-001 (DVD available in English or Spanish)



▶ **Care for Your Air: A Guide to Indoor Air Quality**

This brochure provides quick and simple overview of some key indoor air pollutants including radon, secondhand smoke, asthma triggers, volatile organic compounds, molds and combustion pollutants. The brochure unfolds into a poster that features action steps to improving indoor air.

▶ Available for download at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pdfs/careforyourair.pdf>

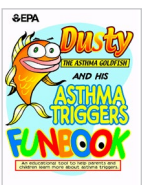


▶ **Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers: Your Children Will Breathe Easier**

This brochure is a handy resource for parents and caregivers of children with asthma. It explains common indoor asthma triggers and how to control them in homes.

▶ Available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/asthma\\_eng.trifold.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/asthma_eng.trifold.pdf)

▶ EPA 402-F-99-005 (Hard Copy English) EPA 402-F-99-005D (Hard Copy Spanish)  
EPA 402-F-99-005A (Hard Copy Chinese) PA 402-F-99-005C (Hard Copy Korean)  
EPA 402-F-99-005B (Hard Copy Vietnamese)

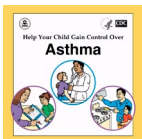


▶ **Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Activity Book**

This educational activity book helps children learn more about asthma triggers.

▶ English version available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/dustythegoldfish\\_en.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/dustythegoldfish_en.pdf)

▶ EPA 402-F-04-008 (Hard Copy English)  
EPA 402-F-04-009 (Hard Copy Spanish)



▶ **Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma**

This brochure offers tips on how to manage asthma and follow simple steps to minimize exposure to asthma triggers found indoors and out.

▶ English version available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/il\\_asthma\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/il_asthma_brochure.pdf)

▶ EPA 402-F-04-021 (Hard Copy English) EPA 402-F-05-021 (Hard Copy Spanish)

# Resources Available (continued)

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!



- ▶ **Implementing an Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps to Help Health Plans Get Started**  
This guide offers health care organizations step-by-step instructions on how to start an asthma home visit program, with emphasis on environmental risk factor management. Representatives from seven health care plans share their experiences and recommendations.

- ▶ Available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/implementing\\_an\\_asthma\\_home\\_visit\\_program.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/implementing_an_asthma_home_visit_program.pdf)

- ▶ EPA 402-K-05-006 (Hard Copy)



- ▶ **IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit**  
The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Action Kit shows schools how to carry out a practical plan of action to improve indoor air problems at little or no cost using straightforward activities and in-house staff. The Action Kit provides best practices, industry guidelines, sample policies and a sample IAQ management plan.

- ▶ Access specific components of the Kit at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-tools-schools-action-kit>

- ▶ Access the interactive problem solving tool at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-problem-solving-tool>



- ▶ **Managing Asthma in the School Environment**  
This guide offers valuable information for all school staff, especially school nurses, teachers and maintenance staff, on how to identify and control common environmental factors in schools that may trigger asthma episodes.

- ▶ Available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/managing\\_asthma.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2013-08/documents/managing_asthma.pdf)

- ▶ HTML Version available at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/managing-asthma-school-environment>



- ▶ **Secondhand Tobacco Smoke and the Health of Your Family (Bilingual)**

With English text on one side and Spanish text on the other side, this straightforward, trifold brochure explains the basics about the dangers of secondhand smoke to families, especially to children. It can be used at health fairs, clinics and hospitals, parent meetings, and at other community activities.

- ▶ Available for download at [http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-09/documents/trifold\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-09/documents/trifold_brochure.pdf)



- ▶ **Why Is Coco Orange?**

Coco the chameleon can't change colors, and his asthma is acting up. Read how Coco and his friends at Lizard Lick Elementary solve this mystery as they learn about air quality and how to stay healthy when the air quality is bad. This picture book is for all children, especially those with asthma, and their caregivers.

- ▶ Available only for download at <http://www3.epa.gov/airnow/picturebook/cocos-orange-day-web.pdf>

## How to Order Publications

In addition to downloading these materials from the website (<http://www.epa.gov/asthma/publications-about-asthma>), you can order publications available in hard copy format from EPA's **National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP)** at no cost.

**Website:** <http://www.epa.gov/nscep>

**Email:** [nscep@bps-lmit.com](mailto:nscep@bps-lmit.com)

**Phone:** 1-800-490-9198 (Monday - Friday from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Eastern). Fax: (301) 604-3408

**Address:** P.O. Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH 45242-0419

Use the **EPA Document Number** when ordering from NSCEP.