

# Addressing Asthma in Schools

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of Adolescent and School Health

Although asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled. In a classroom of 30 children, about three are likely to have asthma.<sup>1</sup> Schools can do their part to control asthma by becoming more “asthma-friendly,” i.e., adopting policies and procedures, and coordinating student services to better serve students with asthma. For example, all students with diagnosed asthma should have an asthma action plan on file that is easily accessible at school.<sup>2</sup> Schools can provide asthma education and collaborate with organizations that focus on asthma. Chances for success are better when the whole school community takes part—school administrators, teachers, and staff, as well as students and parents.

## Asthma Facts:

Among children 0–17 years old in the United States in 2002:

- 12.2% (8.9 million) had been told by a health professional at some point in their lives that they had asthma.<sup>3</sup>
- 8.3% (6.1 million) were reported to currently have asthma.<sup>1</sup>
- 5.8% (4.2 million) had an asthma attack in the last 12 months.<sup>3</sup>

Among children 0–17 years old in the United States in 2000:

- 4.6 million had visited doctors’ offices and hospital outpatient departments.<sup>3</sup>
- 728,000 visited hospital emergency departments.<sup>3</sup>
- 214,000 were hospitalized due to asthma.<sup>3</sup>

The impact of illness and deaths due to asthma is disproportionately higher among low-income populations, minorities, and children in inner cities than in the general population.<sup>4</sup>

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

CDC has identified six strategies for schools and districts to consider as they develop coordinated plans for addressing asthma in schools. The six strategies for addressing asthma within a coordinated school health program are:

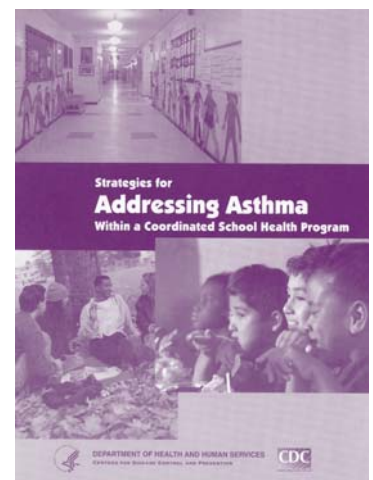
- 1) Establish management and support systems for asthma-friendly schools.
- 2) Provide appropriate school health and mental health services for students with asthma.
- 3) Provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and school staff.
- 4) Provide a safe and healthy school environment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

## The Cost of Asthma in U.S. Children

Lost School Days  
14 Million Days/Year<sup>5</sup>

Asthma Treatment  
\$3.2 Billion/Year<sup>6</sup>

Hospitalization  
3<sup>rd</sup> Leading Cause  
Among Children  
Under 15 Years Old<sup>7</sup>



<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/pdf/strategies.pdf>



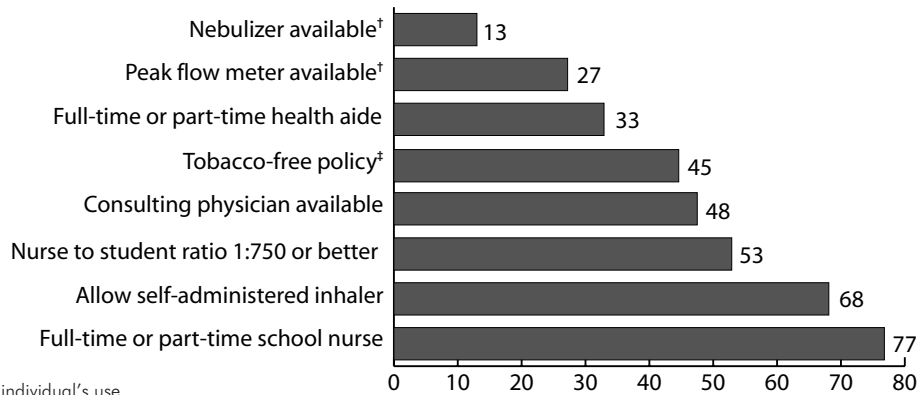
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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## School Health Policies and Programs Study 2000 Data Relating to Asthma Management<sup>8</sup>

Percent of schools that have:



<sup>†</sup> Not just for a specific individual's use.

<sup>‡</sup> The schools prohibit tobacco use at all times, on all school property (including all buildings, facilities, and school grounds), in any form of school transportation, and at school-sponsored events on and off school property.

### School Health Profiles 2002 Percentage of Secondary Schools that Implemented School-based Asthma Management Activities, United States, 2002<sup>9</sup>

Activity	Range %	Median %
Assured immediate access to medications	66.6% to 100.0%	91.8%
Had a full-time registered nurse	1.4% to 98.0%	41.2%
Obtained and used an asthma action plan for all students with asthma	26.8% to 79.7%	56.4%
Taught asthma awareness to all students in at least one grade	13.5% to 47.6%	24.8%
Educated school staff about asthma	25.0% to 67.4%	51.9%

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