

I. Asthma overview

- definition; an estimated 8.9 million Americans under the age of 18 have been diagnosed with asthma at some point during their lives¹
- local statistics of children with asthma
- can be life-threatening; focus on emergency response and school preparedness as life-saving elements
- highlight number of asthma episodes per year in district and any asthma crises that have occurred
- demands on school nurse; nurse not able to be everywhere at once; issues of immediate access to medication

II. How does asthma affect the school?

- students and staff with asthma
- potential asthma emergencies
- student absenteeism
- teacher absenteeism/reduced productivity
- liability issues

III. What are components of school-based asthma education?

- Students with asthma: focus on specific asthma management skills, communicating with parents and school staff.
- Faculty and staff: using an Asthma Action Plan; responding to asthma emergencies; recognizing signs of an asthma episode; helping students manage mild episodes; providing asthma-appropriate physical activity
- All students: Understanding asthma; recognizing signs of an asthma episode; seeking help during an episode; supporting students with asthma
- Parents: How to help manage child's asthma; communication among parents, healthcare provider, school

IV. What will asthma education in the school accomplish?

- decrease asthma crises in schools
- meet specific state health or education policy recommendations (if applicable)
- meet state/county law (if applicable)
- diminish potential liability issues
- improve teacher productivity
- decrease student absenteeism
- improve communication systems among various departments/staff
- address strategies to maximize school health services
- decrease the number of school nurse visits
- prepare staff to respond to specific emergencies
- present opportunities to link with community partners
- present opportunities for positive publicity
- help minimize bad publicity as a result of potential asthma crises and tragedies

V. How is asthma education in the school implemented?

- work with community asthma coalition/local Lung Association to identify best available programs and individuals
- teach faculty, staff, parents, students
- education programs based on NHLBI guidelines
- faculty-staff in-services
- nurse role in education/management of information among all faculty/staff
- specific programs for those students with/without asthma
- parent education opportunities
- budget considerations

¹ Akinbami LJ, Scheendorf, KC. Trends in childhood asthma: prevalence, health care utilization, and mortality. *Pediatrics*, 2002; 110(2):315-322.