

Policies that Support Asthma Prevention Interventions

This list is a high-level overview of local and state public policy strategies to prevent and address asthma. Generally, the policies fall into four main categories: health care delivery and asthma management; childcare and the school environment; home environment and outdoor environment.

NOTE: This list is not a comprehensive survey of the field; rather we hope MHCU learning lab teams will use this document as a starting point for their research into policy approaches.

- 1) Health Care Delivery/Asthma Management** (Focus is on data collection, clinical management, and education.)
 - Establish a city/county/regional asthma task force to address asthma through primary prevention and environmental strategies, with an emphasis on reducing asthma disparities disproportionately affecting lower income communities. (Examples – San Francisco’s Asthma Task Force, Sonoma County Asthma Coalition.)
 - Establish policies that require health insurance providers to cover a range of asthma interventions.

- 2) Childcare/School Environment**
 - Adopt and implement a comprehensive plan for the management of asthma (identify students with asthma, develop and use asthma action plan for those students, establish standard emergency protocols, train staff – esp. health personnel, PE, coaches)
 - Include asthma management and education in school wellness policies.
 - Adopt and implement policies to address environmental triggers for asthma including:
 - Reducing exposure to poor-quality outdoor air by requiring schools to notify staff and students and restrict outdoor activities on days when air quality is poor;
 - Reducing exposure to diesel emissions by eliminating/restricting school bus idling;
 - Developing and implementing indoor air quality management plans that address dampness problems, mold contamination, maintenance and repairs, cleaning, integrated pest management and other factors as detailed in EPA’s Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools; and
 - Requiring schools, grounds, facilities, vehicles and sponsored events to be 100 percent tobacco-free.

- 3) Home Environment**
 - Adopt state and local health and habitability standards related to mold, pests, indoor air quality, etc., including establishing standards for the assessment and remediation of mold in response to complaints.
 - Adopt proactive housing/building code enforcement.
 - Adopt an ordinance to require smoke-free multi-unit housing.
 - Adopt an ordinance to require integrated pest management in multi-unit housing.
 - Establishing health standards for locating new housing (including proper mitigation when building near sources of pollution is unavoidable) and limiting the expansion of roads and other pollution sources near existing housing.

- 4) Outside Environment**
 - Adopt regional wood-burning restrictions and ordinances.
 - Adopt land-use policies that protect public health, such as smart growth principles that minimize sources of pollutants—particularly diesel emissions—from rail yards, ports, distribution centers, and truck routes.
 - Add green buffer zones to mitigate existing sources of pollutants.
 - Adopting policies that reduce diesel emissions, including supporting efforts that ensure small businesses can comply with stronger regulations.

General Resources on Asthma Prevention

FEDERAL POLICY AGENDAS

President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children. *Coordinated Federal Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Asthma Disparities*. (May 2012).

Presents a framework to maximize the use of existing federal resources to address the major public health challenge of reducing asthma disparities, with an emphasis placed on collaboration and activities that address the preventable factors impacting asthma disparities.

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-08/documents/federal_asthma_disparities_action_plan.pdf

American Lung Association. *A National Asthma Public Policy Agenda*. (2009).

Identifies policy changes that could reduce asthma morbidity and mortality. It includes recommended strategies in six key areas relevant in the fight against asthma: healthcare systems and financing; homes; outdoor air; public health infrastructure; schools; and workplaces.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/national-asthma-public-policy-agenda/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

Asthma Policy for Housing. American Lung Association website.

Provides policy recommendations based on an assessment of policies that make the greatest impact on asthma management in homes and includes: housing code ordinances; housing code enforcement; multi-unit housing; and new and remodeled housing.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/national-asthma-public-policy-agenda/asthma-policy-for-housing.html>

Asthma Policy for Schools. American Lung Association website.

Provides proven strategies, model policies, and accompanying tools to help schools become asthma-friendly.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/national-asthma-public-policy-agenda/asthma-policy-for-schools.html>

STATE AND LOCAL POLICY AGENDAS

Lyon-Callo SK, Boss LP, Lara M. A review of potential state and local policies to reduce asthma disparities. *Chest*. Nov. 2007; 132 (5 Suppl): 840S-852S.

Review of the efforts of state and local agencies to identify and target asthma disparities for reduction, as evidenced by written laws and policy documents and use of funding.

[http://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692\(15\)31054-0/pdf](http://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0012-3692(15)31054-0/pdf)

San Francisco Asthma Task Force website.

Works to prevent asthma, reduce asthma disparities, and improve the quality of life for people with asthma who live or work in the City and County of San Francisco, through the use of advocacy, legislative action, and citywide strategies.

<http://sfgov.org/asthma/>

Sonoma County Asthma Coalition website.

Was part of a statewide network of asthma coalitions in California (CAFA) that worked to shape local, regional, and state

policies to reduce the environmental triggers of asthma for school-aged children where they live, learn, and play. Although no longer active, the website contains useful resources on policy and advocacy.

<http://www.sonomaasthma.org>

Public Health Institute’s Regional Asthma Management and Prevention Program (RAMP). *Finding Solutions Through Policy Change (fact sheet)*. (2009).

Helps make the case for policy change to prevent asthma, and provides an exploration of the Community Action to Fight Asthma (CAFA) framework for policy action in schools, homes, and outdoor air.

<http://www.phi.org/resources/?resource=finding-asthma-solutions-through-policy-change>

RAMP and the California School-Based Health Alliance. *Asthma Environmental Intervention Guide for School-Based Health Centers*. (August 2015).

Provides an explanation of the causes of asthma, and is a very helpful guide explaining ways to address different triggers at school, home, outside, and how to work with schools, students, and families to reduce exposure to environmental asthma triggers.

http://www.rampasthma.org/uploads/asthma_guide_sbhc.pdf

RESOURCES SPECIFIC TO ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Strategies for Addressing Asthma in Schools*. (January 2017).

Provides a compilation of information and resources for implementing policies and programs that support asthma management in schools.

https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/pdfs/strategies_for_addressing_asthma_in_schools_508.pdf

Asthma & Children Fact Sheet. American Lung Association website. (February 2017).

Provides specific data on the relationship between asthma and school absenteeism.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/learn-about-asthma/asthma-children-facts-sheet.html>

ChangeLab Solutions. *Not Making the Grade: How Financial Penalties for School Absences Hurt Districts Serving Low-Income, Chronically Ill Kids*. (2014).

Provides data from research studies showing the connection between asthma and school absenteeism, as well as the impact absenteeism due to asthma can have on funding for schools in states where funding is attached to average daily attendance. [http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/School-](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/School-Financing_StatePolicymakers_FINAL_09302014.pdf)

[Financing_StatePolicymakers_FINAL_09302014.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/School-Financing_StatePolicymakers_FINAL_09302014.pdf)

Addressing the Health-Related Causes of Chronic Absenteeism: A Toolkit for Action. Healthy Schools Campaign website. (2017).

Provides knowledge and practical guidance for creating meaningful change to address health-related chronic absenteeism, including best practices and proven interventions to address asthma.

<https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/chronic-absenteeism/>

Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative. American Lung Association website.

Provides a framework and tools that communities and schools can use to work together on a comprehensive approach to asthma management, including planning tools, policy recommendations, and education programs.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/asthma-friendly-schools-initiative/>

Open Airways for Schools. American Lung Association website.

Educates and empowers children through an interactive approach to asthma self-management.

The program teaches children with asthma ages 8 to 11 how to detect the warning signs of asthma, avoid their triggers and make decisions about their health.

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/open-airways-for-schools/>

Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) website.

Provides tools to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting and preventing indoor air quality problems. This can reduce asthma triggers and create a healthier environment for everyone in the building.

<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools>

Green Clean Schools. Healthy Schools Campaign website.

Provides resources to help schools clean better, smarter, and safer in order to reduce asthma triggers.

<https://greencleanschools.org/>

National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. *Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools*. (December 2014).

Provides a useful discussion of why schools should be concerned about asthma, the benefits of effective asthma management at school, and a suite of tools for asthma management.

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/resources/lung/NACI_ManagingAsthma-508%20FINAL.pdf

Wang LY, Zhong Y, Wheeler L. Direct and indirect costs of asthma in school-age children. (Direct and indirect costs of asthma in school-age children. *Prev Chronic Dis*. [serial online]. 2005; 2(1).

Study that estimates the direct and indirect costs of asthma among school-age children.

https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2005/jan/04_0053.htm

OTHER RESOURCES

Asthma and Reducing Exposure to Environmental Triggers. American Health Insurance Plan (AHIP) website.

In collaboration with US EPA, AHIP is working to accelerate efforts to assess and disseminate innovative health plan interventions that help to prevent the onset of asthma episodes related to indoor environmental triggers and promote evidence-based asthma management strategies. Their resources include a new report on keys to success for home-based asthma interventions, asthma management case studies, and webinars.

<https://www.ahip.org/asthma/>

National Asthma Control Program (NACP). CDC website. (January 2017).

NACP works with state health departments, nonprofits, and many others to ensure that a comprehensive array of asthma services is available, and that people with asthma are able to access the services they need.

<https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/nacp.htm>