

# Asthma Data to Action

**Asthma self management education and support are essential to achieve asthma control**

## The Problem

One in every ten adults and one in every thirteen children currently has asthma.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately one in every two New Yorkers with asthma had asthma that was classified as not well controlled or very poorly controlled.<sup>2</sup>

Poor asthma control has resulted in an average of 160,000 emergency department visits, almost 40,000 hospitalizations<sup>3</sup>, and more than 200 deaths<sup>4</sup> annually during 2008-2010.

A gap exists between care recommended by the National Asthma Guidelines and the actual care being provided. For instance, NYS is not consistently meeting Healthy People 2020 (HP2020) goals for asthma self-management education given by a health care provider (Figures 1 and 2).<sup>5</sup>

## National Asthma Guideline<sup>6</sup> Recommendations

**Asthma self-management education** is essential to provide individuals with the skills necessary to control their asthma.

**All individuals with asthma** should receive **tailored education** on:

- how to handle signs and symptoms of worsening asthma
- medication use and compliance
- inhaler and spacer techniques
- use of a written asthma action plan
- environmental triggers for asthma

Health care providers should counsel and refer individuals with asthma to services to **reduce exposure to allergens and irritants** in their environment.

An important component of asthma self-management education is an **asthma action plan** which is a written step-by-step plan that should be developed jointly by the health care provider and person with asthma and updated at least every six months. It is a useful tool that helps people to control their asthma by explaining what medicines to take and when to take them, what triggers to avoid, and what to do during an asthma episode or attack.

## Opportunities Available to Assist NYS in Meeting the National Asthma Guideline Recommendations

The NYS Asthma Program is actively working with a broad range of **public and private partners** to increase access to quality asthma self-management education services.

NYS funds eight **Regional Asthma Coalitions** which are working with local partners to improve the delivery of asthma self-management education in healthcare and community settings.

NYS is one of two states in the nation that include coverage under the state's **Medicaid program** for asthma self-management education services provided by Certified Asthma Educators (AE-Cs) ([http://www.health.ny.gov/health\\_care/medicaid/program/update/2008/2008-10.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2008/2008-10.htm)).

There are more than **140 AE-Cs in NYS** who have proven competencies in asthma assessment and management and the skills to teach and counsel individuals with asthma and their families.<sup>7</sup> The NYS Asthma Program is working to further integrate these AE-Cs into the healthcare setting to provide asthma education services.

## What Can Be Done

### State Leaders can:

Develop and implement policies to increase access to quality self-management support and education services.

### Health care providers can:

Integrate AE-Cs into their clinical practices to increase access to quality asthma self-management education.

Complete and update individualized asthma action plans for all patients with asthma.

Assess patient's asthma specific triggers and advise patients to make changes to the environment to reduce or eliminate asthma triggers.

### Health insurers can:

Provide reimbursement for high quality, evidence-based asthma self-management support and education services provided in the clinic and home settings.

### People with asthma can:

Develop an asthma action plan with their health care provider.

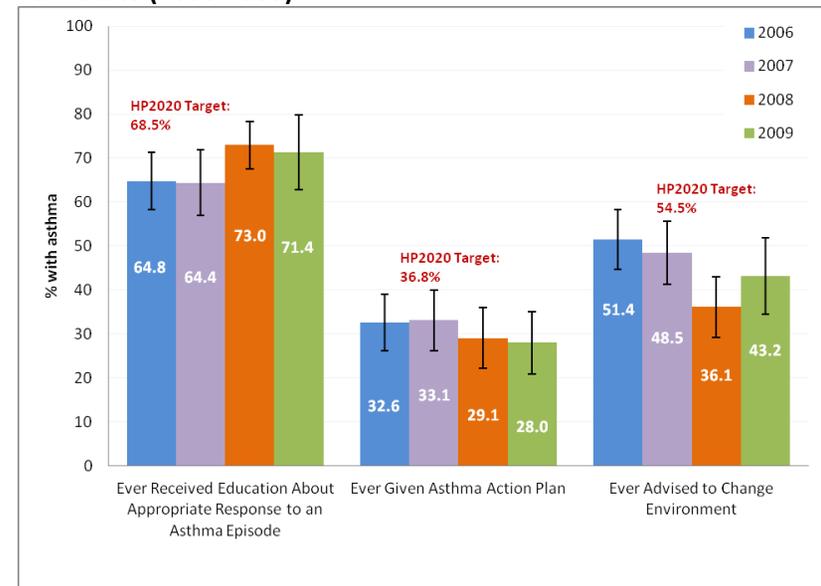
Seek asthma self-management support and education services from health care providers, health insurers, and the community.

## Communities can:

Raise awareness among primary and specialty care providers about the skills and abilities of AE-Cs, especially within those practices serving individuals with asthma who are enrolled in Medicaid.

## Progress To Date

**Figure 1: Healthy People 2020 Objectives Related to Asthma Self-management Education Given By a Health Care Provider, New York State (2006-2009)**



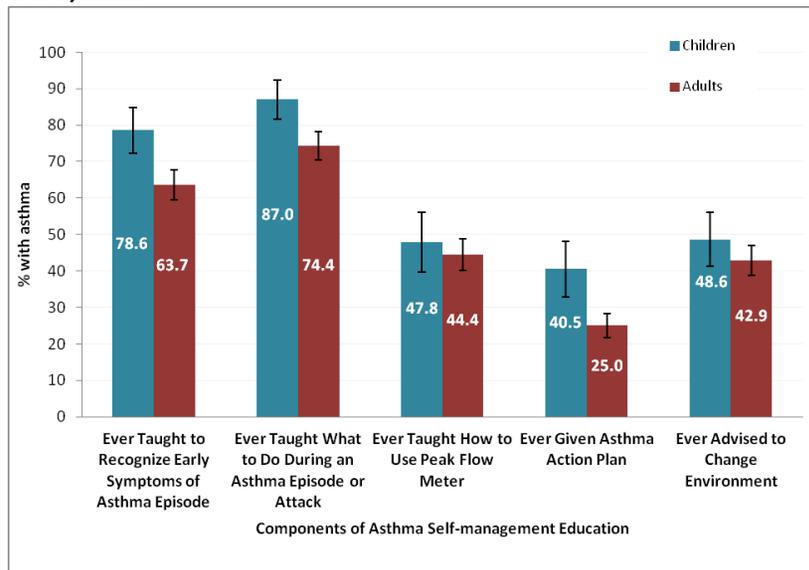
Data Source: BRFSS Asthma Call-Back Survey  
Percentages are age adjusted to the 2000 United States population.

HP2020 includes three objectives related to asthma self-management education provided by health care providers including: (1) how to respond to an asthma episode or attack, (2) ever being given an asthma action plan, and (3) ever being advised to change one's home, school or work environment to improve their asthma.

Data in Figure 1 show that:

- NYS met the HP2020 objective regarding individuals with asthma who received education about the appropriate response to an asthma attack or episode in 2008 and 2009.
- Data for the other two HP2020 objectives (i.e., being given an asthma action plan and changing one’s environment) suggest that NYS has not met the national targets.
- Individuals with asthma in NYS received asthma education and self-management tools at a much lower rate compared to the National Asthma Guideline recommendations.

**Figure 2: Components of Asthma Self-management Education Given By a Health Care Provider for Children and Adults, New York State, 2009**



Data Source: BRFSS Asthma Call-Back Survey

Overall, in NYS, children with asthma were more likely than adults with asthma to receive asthma self-management education from their health care provider (Figure 2).

All people with asthma should have an asthma action plan. However, only one in four adults with asthma and 40% of children in NYS ever received one from their health care provider (Figure 2).

## Contact

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## References

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- 3) New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Biometrics, Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS) data, 2008-2010.
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- 5) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy People 2020 Objectives – Respiratory Diseases. Available from: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicId=36> [Last accessed: May 25, 2012]
- 6) National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. *Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the diagnosis and management of asthma*. NIH pub no 07-4051. Bethesda, MD: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institutes of Health. 2007. Available from: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/>
- 7) National Asthma Educator Certification Board, 2010