

**I. What is asthma?**

- chronic health condition
- affects an estimated 8.9 million Americans under the age of 18,<sup>1</sup> including (number) in (state)
- can be life-threatening
- causes breathing problems called asthma “attacks” or “episodes” that can range from mild to serious

**II. Who gets asthma?**

- can affect anyone; some groups are disproportionately affected
- can be diagnosed at any age
- not “outgrown”
- an estimated 27.6 million Americans have been diagnosed; more than one-third of them (at least 8.9 million) are children under 18<sup>2</sup>

**III. How does asthma affect the school?**

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

**IV. How does the school manage asthma?**

- school health services (nursing care, liaison with primary health care provider, emergency protocols, Asthma Action Plans)
- school health team/council
- provide healthy indoor air quality, keeping potential asthma triggers in the forefront of efforts
- case management of students with increased absenteeism due to asthma and respiratory illness
- student/family referrals/links with other community resources
- education of students
- education of faculty/staff

**V. What will asthma education in the school accomplish?**

- A. For students with asthma (Content and skills will vary by age but will incorporate):
- definition of asthma
  - identifying triggers
  - avoiding triggers
  - using peak flow meters, knowing your peak flow
  - knowing your medications
  - signs of an asthma episode
  - seeking help
  - administering your medications, (including use of spacers)

- B. For all students (Content will vary by age but will incorporate):

- definition of asthma
- who gets asthma/how
- medications
- asthma episodes
- signs/symptoms of an asthma episode
- responding to an asthma episode

- C. For faculty/staff:

- definition of asthma
- communications among staff
- signs/symptoms of an asthma episode
- asthma medications
- peak flow meters, charts
- responding to an asthma episode/using an Asthma Action Plan
- emergency protocol for students without Asthma Action Plans
- preventing asthma episodes, including modified physical activity

- D. For parents:

- definition of asthma
- parental responsibilities
- school response/responsibilities
- Asthma Action Plans
- critical communication with schools
- possibly identifying undiagnosed cases of asthma in students

**VI. How is asthma education in the school implemented?**

- work with community asthma coalition/local Lung Association to identify best available programs and individuals to 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

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

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Health Statistics. Raw Data from the *National Health Interview Survey*, US, 1997-2000 (Analysis by the American Lung Association Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Using SPSS and SUDAAN software).