



CALIFORNIA BREATHING (CB)

PROTECTING HEALTH, SAVING COSTS: WHY CALIFORNIA NEEDS THE NATIONAL ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM

California Breathing (CB) has been part of CDC's National Asthma Control Program since 2000. They work alongside partners to reduce asthma disparities by providing disease surveillance, building community capacity, and developing evidence-based interventions that deliver evidence-based asthma self-management education and improve environmental conditions that cause or exacerbate asthma in disproportionately burdened populations.

CALIFORNIA'S ASTHMA BURDEN:

- About 1 in 7 Californians (over 5.9 million Californians) have asthma.
- California children face particularly severe impacts:
 - Compared to adults, children (ages 0–17) are 2x as likely to visit the emergency department and 3x as likely to be hospitalized for asthma.
 - Compared to White children:
 - Black children are twice as likely to have asthma, with 6x higher ED visits and 5x higher hospitalization rates.
 - Hispanic/Latino children are twice as likely to have asthma, with 2x higher ED visits and 1.4x higher hospital stays.
- Each year, asthma causes approximately **390 deaths; 125,000 emergency department (ED) visits; and 14,000 hospitalizations** and costs the state approximately **\$14.4 billion** dollars.

KEY OUTCOMES FROM CALIFORNIA BREATHING:

CB, housed within the California Department of Public Health, leverages NACP funding to implement asthma surveillance, training, education, and technical assistance statewide.

Asthma Management Academy (AsMA):

- A workforce training program for community health workers (CHWs) that improves asthma control and reduces hospital use. Trained **740 CHWs from 100+ organizations** to date.
- Among patients with uncontrolled asthma who received AsMA-based education: 69% improved asthma control; 54% improved medication adherence; 70% reduction in missed school/work days; **85% reduction in asthma-related ED visits and hospitalizations.**

Centering Health Equity:



- CB conducted a racial health equity assessment of AsMA, revealing gaps in reaching Black and Native communities.
- Program adaptations now include tailored training for Black-serving CHWs and Native community representatives and inclusive language, focused outreach, and culturally specific case examples.

Surveillance and Policy Support:

- CB provides county- and population-specific asthma data via the California Open Data Portal and Tracking California's Data Explorer.
- Data guides program planning, clinical care, advocacy, and legislative action.

WHY FEDERAL FUNDING MATTERS:

The NACP is the **primary source of funding** for California Breathing and supports three full-time staff. Without this federal support:

- CB would no longer provide statewide **asthma surveillance data** to public health partners, clinics, policymakers, and local health departments.
- The **Asthma Management Academy**—a vital tool in addressing asthma disparities—would no longer operate, undermining the delivery of asthma self-management education by CHWs.
- CB would be unable to support the **stock albuterol standing order law (AB 1283)** that allows California schools to provide emergency asthma treatment.
- Technical assistance to providers, clinics, and managed care plans to implement **guidelines-based asthma care** would end.

Continued federal investment is essential to sustain and scale these proven strategies that reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for Californians with asthma.

THE RISKS OF DEFUNDING:

- Increases in hospitalizations and emergency visits.
- More missed school days, higher healthcare costs, and poorer asthma control.
- Worsened health outcomes, especially as California faces climate-related challenges like wildfires and air pollution.

THE NATIONAL ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM is essential to California's ability to manage asthma, improve quality of life, and save healthcare costs. Restoring and protecting NACP funding ensures Californians with asthma—especially the most vulnerable—continue to receive the education, support, and services they need to breathe easier.