

UTAH ASTHMA PROGRAM (UAP)

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

The Utah Asthma Program (UAP) has been part of CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) since 2001. The UAP works alongside partners to improve the quality of asthma care, improve asthma management in schools, and foster policies to help reduce exposure to asthma triggers in outdoor, indoor, and workplace environments.

UTAH'S ASTHMA BURDEN:

- Asthma affects over 281,000 Utahns, including over 50,000 children, contributing to preventable health emergencies, missed school and workdays, and increased healthcare costs.
- Poor air quality—including winter inversions, wildfire smoke, and ozone pollution—can exacerbate asthma symptoms and increase the risk of attacks.

KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE UTAH ASTHMA PROGRAM:

Utah Asthma Home Visiting Program (UAHVP):

Launched in 2016, the program uses local health department (LHD) staff to conduct three home visits and two follow-up calls with families managing uncontrolled asthma. The UAHVP provides asthma self-management education, trigger assessment and reduction, and referrals to healthcare providers or home remediation services.

- All participants (100%) agreed that the UAHVP would improve their quality of life.
- 80% of home visit recipients gained better symptom control, and 82% maintained improvements one year later.
- Results showed a 91% drop in missed workdays, 71% drop in asthma-related ER visits, and an 83% drop in hospitalizations.

Clinic-Based Asthma Care Improvement:

- Since 2014, UAP and the Utah Pediatric Partnership to Improve Healthcare Quality have successfully recruited and guided 37 clinics to improve diagnosis and asthma management through 6-month quality improvement collaboratives.
- A 2022 evaluation showed that participating clinics improved in many areas, including an increase in asthma assessments using a standardized tool (ACT) from 38% to 90% and an increase in patients with a current asthma action plan/self-management plan on file from 55% to 100%



Air Quality and School Health:

- UAP worked with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality and the Asthma Task Force in 2016 to update the Utah Recess Guidance, which provides recommendations for school personnel on when to hold recess indoors on poor air quality days.
- UAP continues to maintain an air quality listserv to provide particulate alerts, sending emails to 325 schools on days when students should remain indoors.

Stock Albuterol Law and School Readiness:

- The Utah Asthma Task Force collaborated with the UAP on a workgroup concerning a stock albuterol policy in Utah starting in late 2018. The stock albuterol law passed unanimously in the 2019 legislative session, allowing Utah schools to keep stock albuterol and administer it to students in case of an emergency.
- The UAP further collaborated with additional partners, including the Utah Department of Health and Human Services School Nurse Liaison, to prepare guidelines and data collection forms for the implementation of the policy in July 2020.
- In 2022, an evaluation of stock albuterol identified key barriers to implementing the initiative, including finding a provider to write the prescription, finding a pharmacy to fill the prescription, and costs to acquire the medication.

WHY FEDERAL FUNDING MATTERS:

The UAP is committed to improving the health of Utahns through community partnerships and evidence-based interventions. Without continued investment, proven efforts—such as home visiting, virtual asthma education, clinical improvement collaboratives, and school air quality protections—could be disrupted or scaled back.

Continued support for the **NACP** will ensure Utah families, schools, and health departments have the tools they need to prevent asthma emergencies and reduce health disparities across the state.

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 Utahns faces air quality challenges.

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