

VERMONT ASTHMA PROGRAM (VAP)

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

VAP has been part of CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) since 2000. They work 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. To improve equity to access and asthma management, strong collaborations exist between the state program and school nursing, environmental health, The Weatherization Program, health insurers, University of Vermont (UVM) Lung Center obesity and asthma researchers (including pharmacists), and several hospitals. VAP supports the advancement of indoor air quality through the Envision Program and provides funding to organizations that have expertise in medical delivery and asthma care, health promotion, and asthma-friendly schools.

VERMONT'S ASTHMA BURDEN:

- Vermont consistently ranks among the top 10 states for asthma prevalence.
- In 2021, 24% of adults below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line had asthma, underscoring the critical need for targeted asthma support and intervention.

KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE VERMONT ASTHMA PROGRAM:

- **Fewer Emergency Visits & Hospitalizations:** From 2016 to 2020, asthma-related emergency department visits dropped from 194.5 to 122.7 per 10,000 population, and hospitalizations decreased from 80.4 to 56.7 per 10,000.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** Adults with asthma reporting exacerbations fell from 56% in 2015 to 43% in 2021.
- **Proactive Community Engagement:** Vermont's program partners with schools and businesses to reduce environmental triggers through walkthroughs, education, and support for asthma-friendly school initiatives.
- **Innovative Public Health Response:** The program quickly developed and distributed resources on safer cleaning products, essential oil/fragrance risks, mold prevention, and best practices for ventilation—directly responding to community concerns.



ECONOMIC IMPACT:

- The Rutland Regional Medical Center's Intensive Asthma Care Program—supported by VAP—helped patients achieve asthma control through home visits, saving an average of **\$654** in costs per participant who completed three sessions.
- Reductions in hospitalizations and emergency visits save Medicaid and private insurers significant healthcare dollars.
- Asthma management reduces school absenteeism and improves workplace productivity.

WHY FEDERAL FUNDING MATTERS: VAP is funded solely by the NACP. Without this funding, Vermont would lose:

- Statewide asthma self-management education initiatives.
- Technical assistance for asthma-friendly school programs.
- Coordination between school nurses, pediatricians, and public health partners.
- Timely responses to emerging asthma-related environmental concerns.

THE RISKS OF DEFUNDING:

- Increases in hospitalizations and emergency visits.
- More missed school days, higher healthcare costs, and poorer asthma control (currently 60% of Vermonters with asthma have uncontrolled asthma).
- Worsened health outcomes, especially as Vermont faces climate-related challenges like rising temperatures and air pollution.

PATIENT SUCCESS STORY

A Vermont athlete living with asthma since childhood faced serious challenges to his education, health, and participation in sports, leading to frequent missed school days, lost opportunities, and repeated emergency visits. Labeled as fragile and too risky for athletics, he struggled until receiving a tailored treatment plan from a University of Vermont doctor—what he describes as a plan that **“saved his life.”** Today, he's a Spartan Race champion, motivational speaker, certified personal trainer, and coach, contributing to both the economy and his community—while avoiding hospitalizations and emergency visits through well-controlled asthma.

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