

## School Stock Inhaler Program Update

A new state law was passed in 2017 to allow schools to administer emergency inhalers to students or adults experiencing respiratory distress. Since that time, a coalition of stakeholders has been promoting and implementing the program across Arizona. Please share this good news with your colleagues.

### Asthma in Arizona:

- 10.9% of school-age children have asthma compared to 9.2% nationally.
- Kids with asthma miss 2.48 more days of school each year.
- Severe respiratory distress among children leads to about 2,700 9-1-1 calls every year.
- About 50% of these calls result in EMS transports to the emergency department.



### Evidence-Based Intervention Program:

A 2-year pilot program for stock inhalers in Tucson schools was designed by Professor Lynn Gerald, University of Arizona. Outcomes:

- 20% reduction in 911 calls
- 40% reduction in emergency transports.
- New state law is based on success of pilot

**Pima County Outcomes:** after the law passed, 246 schools in the Tucson metro area implemented the inhaler program in the 2017-18 school year.

- Schools documented 1,026 stock inhaler uses
- 82.4% of uses had a prior known asthma diagnosis
- 5 calls made to 9-1-1 with EMS transport (0.5%)
- 1 call to 9-1-1 with no EMS transport (0.1%)
- 773 kids returned to class (83.9%)
- 142 returned home with caregiver (15.4%)

### How many Arizona schools have adopted the program?

- Over 400, including Pima County, Maricopa County, unified school districts in Maricopa and Prescott, plus the Tuba City and Chinle schools on the Navajo Reservation

## How much does it cost?

- About \$100 per school for one Albuterol inhaler and 5 spacers.
- Many schools provide funding in their budget. They are also allowed to accept grants and funding to purchase the supplies
- Based on Medicaid reimbursement rates for EMS transport and ED admission, the estimated cost savings per year in Pima County: \$130,000.
- If adopted statewide, cost savings would be an estimated \$900,000 per year

*Albuterol Inhaler*



*Spacer*



## How does the program work?

- At least 2 employees from the school must take annual online training on how to recognize symptoms, administer treatment and handle emergencies
- The school Board must approve the program's policies & procedures
- Schools must get a standing prescription for inhalers from a physician or nurse practitioner
- Trained staff members are responsible for
  - o Getting the medication and inhalers
  - o Storing and managing the medication properly
  - o Giving medication to students or adults who show signs of respiratory distress while at school or a school-sponsored event
  - o Contacting the parent or guardian regarding the incident
  - o Contacting 9-1-1 if necessary
  - o Documenting and retaining the incident data
- Medical providers who sign standing orders, the school district and employees of participating schools are immune from legal liability



## Benefits of the program:



- Provides immediate & medically appropriate relief to anyone who experiences respiratory distress
- Reduces 911 calls & transports to the emergency room
- Allows most children to return to class after treatment for an episode, reducing lost school time
- Reduces lost work time for parents
- Identifies children who need to be evaluated by a physician or provider for respiratory care

## How to get started:

- Program details, toolkit & checklist are at this website: [www.azasthma.org/take-action](http://www.azasthma.org/take-action)
- For Maricopa County schools, follow the step-by-step guide at <https://ssmp.maricopa.gov/>.
- For questions specific to the implementation, contact Ashley Lowe via email at [Stockinhailer@email.arizona.edu](mailto:Stockinhailer@email.arizona.edu)

*Submitted by Barbara Burkholder, Arizona Asthma Coalition*