

# FLORIDA ASTHMA PLAN

2015 - 2019



Asthma is widely considered an epidemic in the United States today and is one of the top public health priorities in Florida. Asthma is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways causing recurring attacks of symptoms, such as wheezing and coughing. Inflammation makes the airways sensitive to various allergens and irritants in the environment, including mold, dust mites, animal dander, pollen, diesel emissions and tobacco smoke. This disease affects people of all ages, but most often starts in childhood. The public health community and asthma experts have very limited information about the precise cause of asthma and ways to prevent it, however improved scientific understanding of asthma has led to significant improvements in methods to control and manage asthma. The purpose of this plan is to provide direction and guidance for healthcare professionals, public health officials, environmentalists and other members of the health, medical and educational community who are concerned about asthma in Florida. What follows is a summary of demographics in Florida, the burden of asthma, an introduction to the Florida Asthma Coalition, and a five year strategic plan for addressing asthma across the state.

### Demographics of Florida

Florida is the third most populous state in the nation. The mid-year estimate for Florida's population in 2014 was 19.9 million. By 2020, Florida's population is expected to increase to 21,149,697.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, steadily increasing migration patterns makes Florida the fastest growing state in the nation. The state's population is distributed among inner city, suburban, rural, industrial, and agricultural communities. The population is also diverse with respect to age, gender, race and ethnicity. In 2014, Non-Whites comprised of roughly 22% of Florida's population. Florida is home to an estimated one million children under the age of 5 and more than three million children between the ages of 5 and 19. Children ages 19 and under account for more than 25% of the state's total population.<sup>2</sup> Florida's adult population includes more than 6 million individuals aged 55 and older and asthma mortality rates are highest among these individuals, accounting for approximately 57% of deaths due to asthma from 2009-2013.<sup>3</sup> This segment (55 and older) of the population accounts for almost one-third (31.2%) of the state's total population and requires a strategic approach when developing public health surveillance, education and prevention programs.<sup>4</sup>

### The Burden of Asthma in Florida

Asthma is a leading cause of preventable hospitalizations, school absenteeism and work-related lung disease in Florida. In addition, asthma incurs high costs, in terms of the costs of care, lost workdays and productivity, and lower quality of life for persons with asthma and their families. The rates of asthma have increased dramatically over the last thirty years in all populations in Florida. Recent Florida data show that approximately 557,000 children under age 18 and 2,000,000 adults have been told they had asthma at some point in their lives.<sup>5</sup> Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic and low-income populations bear a disproportionate share of the burden of asthma.

Asthma is the most common chronic (long-term) illness among children. Many children with asthma spend most or part of their day in school or child care; therefore, appropriate support at schools and child care facilities is needed to help manage their asthma symptoms. The school districts and child care facilities must work to overcome the difficulties faced by children with asthma and support children in managing their asthma in order to promote their health and education.

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research, 2014

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Estimates, 2014

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 2013

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Estimates, 2014

<sup>5</sup> Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2013

Pollutants in the air, such as cigarette smoke, dust mite, molds, cockroach allergens, pet dander and particulate matter can trigger asthma symptoms. In addition, occupational, or workplace, exposure to certain chemicals, toxins, allergens or dust can cause an onset of asthma and its symptoms. Whether indoors or outdoors, it is important to improve air quality and lower the exposure to air pollutants and reduce workplace exposures to decrease the likelihood of developing asthma. Properly managing asthma involves increasing access to care and education for people with asthma and for health care providers. For these reasons, asthma is a public health priority for the State of Florida.

## FLORIDA ASTHMA COALITION & FLORIDA'S ASTHMA STATE PLAN

### Florida's Asthma Coalition

Since its inception in the spring of 2009, the Florida Asthma Coalition (FAC) has grown to more than 170 members, representing over 65 organizations across Florida. This partnership unites a diverse group of professionals including, but not limited to, environmental experts, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, schools, state and local government from across the state to increase the efficacy of asthma programs. Asthma is a complex disease that requires a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach to effective management at both the individual and population levels. For this reason, the Florida Asthma Coalition divided into four workgroups targeting focus areas to address this public health priority: **Schools and Child Care, Home Visiting, Primary Care Providers, and Hospitals**. These workgroups work to collaboratively identify innovative opportunities and approaches to address the burden of asthma in Florida and will work through its dedicated partners to implement the objectives and activities outlined in this plan.

### Florida's State Asthma Plan

The intent of the Florida Asthma Plan 2015-2019 is to serve as the detailed blueprint for how efforts and resources can be combined to strengthen the collective capacity in Florida to lessen the burden of asthma and improve the quality of life for Floridians living with asthma. Providing comprehensive care requires a stepwise approach consisting of various segments, such as asthma control and management and providing or linking those affected to healthcare services. The FAC created the Florida Asthma Plan 2015-2019 to address all of the necessary components of asthma care and management. The Florida Asthma Coalition will promote the goal and specific activities outlined below, primarily through the efforts of workgroups.

Goal: Reduce asthma morbidity.

Long Term Objective:

- Strengthen the collective capacity in Florida to lessen the burden of asthma and improve the quality of life for Floridians living with asthma, increase the provision and quality of comprehensive asthma control services, and reduce disparities in asthma care and health outcomes.

Intermediate Objectives:

- Increase the number of **schools** recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 16 in 2015 to 30 by 2019.
- Increase the number of **health plans** recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 5 by 2019.
- Increase the number of **hospitals** recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 3 by 2019.
- Increase the number of **primary care providers** recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 10 by 2019.
- Increase the number of **pharmacies** recognized for implementing best-practice standards for Asthma Care from 0 in 2015 to 3 by 2019.

**Objective 1: Increase the number of schools recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 16 in 2015 to 30 by 2019.**

*Activities:*

- Develop and carryout an annual marketing plan for the school recognition.
- Use surveillance data to target entities serving high-risk populations.
- Incentivize participation by entities serving high-risk populations.
- Monitor, evaluate and implement strategies for continuous improvement.

**Objective 2: Increase the number of health plans recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 5 by 2019.**

*Activities:*

- Establish and implement a Learning and Action Network for health plans in partnership with the Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida and the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation.
- Establish a health plans recognition opportunity through the Florida Asthma Coalition, inclusive of criteria for reimbursement of a Home-Based, Multi-Trigger, Multicomponent Environmental Intervention.
- Develop and carryout an annual marketing plan for the health plans recognition.
- Use surveillance data to target entities serving high-risk populations.
- Incentivize participation by entities serving high-risk populations.
- Monitor, evaluate and implement strategies for continuous improvement.

**Objective 3: Increase the number of hospitals recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 3 by 2019.**

*Activities:*

- Establish a recognition opportunity through the Florida Asthma Coalition.
- Develop and carryout an annual marketing plan for the hospitals recognition, inclusive of criteria for client referral to a Home-Based, Multi-Trigger, Multicomponent Environmental Intervention.
- Establish and implement a Learning and Action Network for hospitals.
- Use surveillance data to target entities serving high-risk populations.
- Incentivize participation by entities serving high-risk populations.
- Monitor, evaluate and implement strategies for continuous improvement.

**Objective 4: Increase the number of primary care providers recognized for implementing best practices for asthma care from 0 in 2015 to 10 by 2019.**

*Activities:*

- Establish a primary care providers recognition opportunity through the Florida Asthma Coalition.
- Develop and carryout an annual marketing plan for the primary care providers recognition, inclusive of criteria for the implementation of/client referral to a Home-Based, Multi-Trigger, Multicomponent Environmental Intervention.
- Establish and implement a Learning and Action Network for primary care providers.

- Use surveillance data to target entities serving high-risk populations.
- Incentivize participation by entities serving high-risk populations.
- Monitor, evaluate and implement strategies for continuous improvement.

**Objective 5: Increase the number of pharmacies recognized for implementing best-practice standards for Asthma Care from 0 in 2015 to 3 by 2019.**

*Activities:*

- Establish a pharmacies recognition opportunity through the Florida Asthma Coalition.
- Develop and carryout an annual marketing plan for the pharmacies' recognition.
- Establish and implement a Learning and Action Network for pharmacies.
- Use surveillance data to target entities serving high-risk populations.
- Incentivize participation by entities serving high-risk populations.
- Monitor, evaluate and implement strategies for continuous improvement.

## EVALUATION PLAN

The Florida Asthma Coalition places great importance on program evaluation. The Florida Asthma Program continues to develop and implement meaningful program goals to ensure sustainability and, ultimately, improve health outcomes for Floridians. As the importance of effective program evaluation increases, so does the need for expertise. Evaluation is a key component in FAC's ability to shift with the changing environment and adjust activities to match the needs of Floridians affected by Asthma. Evaluation data will be used for evidence-based decision-making, quality improvement efforts, and program change. This information will be shared to promote program expansion and encourage continued investment of resources towards the goals outlined in Florida's Asthma Plan 2015-2019 activities.

This evaluation will determine the extent to which the plan is being implemented as intended and the degree to which objectives are moving toward completion. The Florida Asthma Coalition will review the performance measures and evaluate outcomes for the objectives listed above related to increasing the number partnerships and the number of recognized best practices among schools, health plans, hospitals, primary care providers and pharmacies.

Through data collection findings, the Florida Asthma Coalition plans to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of its efforts related to reducing the burden of asthma in Florida. The Coalition will make strong efforts to be visible throughout the state of Florida by promoting asthma control and management activities, strengthening partnerships and providing resources to schools, healthcare professionals, public health officials and environmentalists.