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# Newsletter



Hawaii  
Asthma  
Initiative

*Working together  
to reduce the  
burden of asthma  
in Hawai‘i*





## Program and Coalition Update

The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) State Asthma Control Program (HSACP) is pleased to present the Hawai'i Asthma Initiative (HAI) Newsletter. The HAI is a broad-based, multi-organizational, statewide community collaborative whose goal is to bring the public and private sectors together in an effort to increase the quality and years of healthy life for people impacted by asthma. This initiative is supported by the HSACP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This newsletter is designed to improve communication among stakeholders and partners and provide updates on current activities.

This past year, the HSACP focused its efforts on educating communities about how to manage asthma and how to create and sustain environments that protect us all. The HSACP, in collaboration with a wide array of partners and stakeholders has:

- Expanded asthma management initiatives for children in rural areas;
- Promoted awareness and action around air quality and asthma in vog affected areas;
- Improved asthma management practices in hospitals, physician's offices and schools;
- Gained extensive media coverage throughout the year promoting asthma awareness, highlighting key triggers for asthma and providing useful tips on how to minimize exposure;
- Reduced exposure to asthma triggers such as cockroaches and tobacco smoke among residents in public housing and increasing awareness of the link between cockroaches and asthma.



The HSACP is pleased to announce that it has been granted a new 5-year cooperative agreement (2009-2014) with the CDC. This funding will enable the HSACP to continue to sustain its network of individuals and organizations to: (1) increase Hawai'i's understanding of the burden of asthma, particularly the identification of health disparities and social determinants of health that influence health outcomes; (2) engage community partners in the planning and delivery of asthma-related programs and services; and (3) develop culturally-tailored and community-driven strategies to meet the needs of all Hawai'i residents with asthma.

The HSACP will focus on the following goals:

1. Reduce asthma disparities among populations disproportionately affected by asthma as compared to the general population with asthma.
2. Reduce the state hospitalization and emergency department visit rates for asthma.
3. Increase the proportion of people with asthma who report that they received self-management education.
4. Improve the state's asthma-related public health infrastructure.
5. Maintain a Comprehensive State Asthma Surveillance System and disseminate all relevant asthma-related surveillance data.

During the coming year, the HSCAP will continue to convene its dedicated group of enthusiastic partners willing to commit their professional expertise and resources towards the implementation of activities outlined in the Hawai'i Asthma Plan. We look forward to working with you.



## Childhood Rural Asthma Project

The Childhood Rural Asthma Project focuses on building community capacity to control factors that contribute to asthma severity and developing strategies to control indoor environmental factors that exacerbate asthma.

The current phase of the project is taking place at the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC). WCCHC has expanded its existing asthma education services to include a home-based environmental assessment for families of children with asthma.

With support from the HSACP, the Hawai'i Primary Care Association and University of Hawai'i Office of Public Health Studies, WCCHC case managers are recruiting families from the pediatric clinic to participate in the project.

Families will receive in-depth asthma education, as well as a customized toolkit to help reduce asthma triggers such as dust mites, mold, furry pets and cockroaches in the home. Toolkit resources may include pillow and mattress covers, cockroach traps and non-toxic cleaning materials.

## Hawai'i Volcano Helpline

Recent changes in volcanic activity at the Kilauea summit have created potential health hazards for people with asthma and other respiratory conditions on the island of Hawai'i. Two vents (Halemaumau and Puu Oo) are primarily responsible. Due to the direction of the predominant trade winds, emissions from the vents are usually blown southwest to the Kau and Kona districts, with rare days when the winds blow in the opposite direction towards Hilo.



Last year, the DOH introduced the Hawai'i Volcano Helpline. Available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, the helpline offers updated recorded messages on daily sulfur dioxide and particulate levels on the island of Hawai'i.

This summer, the HSACP established a partnership with the DOH Hazard Evaluation Section and the Emergency Medical Services to continue supporting the helpline and create a special asthma message:

*People with asthma are more likely to experience health effects from vog such as difficulty breathing, coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or a reduced ability to do usual activities. To be prepared, keep asthma medications handy and use daily or controller medications as prescribed. During heavy vog, avoid strenuous activity and tobacco smoke, drink water, and stay inside or leave the area completely. If you experience severe asthma symptoms or if medications do not help, seek emergency care.*

Call the Helpline at the toll-free number (866) 767-5044. Or visit <http://www.hiso2index.info>.



## Hawai'i Asthma-Friendly Pharmacy Project

The goal of the Hawaii Asthma-Friendly Pharmacy Project is to develop strategies that pharmacists and pharmacy students can employ to improve outcomes for patients with asthma.

The University of Hawaii, Hilo College of Pharmacy is a key project partner. During the 2008-2009 academic year, first- and second-year pharmacy students provided asthma education and screening during their rotations in retail pharmacies and community clinics the Hilo area. Their preceptors were also trained on the current guidelines for the management and treatment of asthma.

Pharmacy students administered the Asthma Control Test ([www.asthmacontrol.com](http://www.asthmacontrol.com)) to patients picking up asthma medications. This five-question, validated tool is used to assess asthma control. The HSACP found that 73% of people scored less than 20, meaning that their asthma was not in control. These individuals were given an asthma action plan template and urged to follow up with their primary care physicians.

This fall, the project moves into its second year. Retail and clinic activities will continue, as well as other asthma education efforts in the community.

## Hawai'i Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative

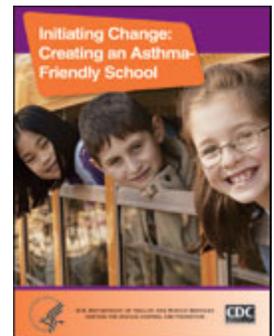
The Hawai'i Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative is designed to affect multiple parts of the school system in order to improve asthma in Hawai'i's school age population. Hawai'i's children have higher current asthma prevalence (15.1% for 5-9 year olds, 11.9% for 10-14 year olds and 11.2% for 15-17 year olds) than the rest of population (9.0%).

Project partners are the DOH Coordinated School Health Program and Public Health Nursing Branch and the Hawai'i Department of Education. The project will engage school health aides, maintenance staff and administration at all 250 public schools in the state.

The goals are to promote and enforce asthma-friendly school policies, such as tobacco-free campuses and protocols for allowing self-administration of asthma inhalers and on-campus medication storage, and to encourage the implementation of less-toxic cleaning methods to maintain healthy indoor air quality.

Baseline survey results showed that:

- 96% of schools allow storage of asthma medication at school.
- In 89% of schools, students are allowed to carry and self-administer asthma medications.
- In 35% of schools, each child with asthma has an individual written Asthma Action Plan.
- Most schools are trying to reduce allergens (mold, cockroaches, dust mites, pets, strong odors or fumes), yet only 1/4 have written plans to maintain good indoor air quality; Hawai'i and Maui schools are most likely to have a plan.
- Most Hawai'i island schools (71%) have an action plan to address days when vog is heavy.





# Public Housing Integrated Pest Management

The Public Housing Integrated Pest Management Project will increase the capacity of Hawai'i's public housing management and residents to implement integrated pest management strategies which will help prevent asthma exacerbations. The project will take at Kuhio Park Terrace, a public housing complex with approximately 2,500 residents, including 1,000 children.

The project builds on the success of the Hawai'i Catch-a-Roach Project, in which the HSACP partnered with the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) and distributed non-toxic cockroach traps and a brochure about reducing exposure to cockroaches in order to prevent asthma exacerbations to residents of public housing. Evaluation from this project indicated that knowledge about the link between cockroaches and asthma increased, as well as the use of cockroach traps instead of more toxic bug sprays, foggers and bombs.

Partners in this effort are the HPHA and the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, who will coordinate a training program for resident managers on the implementation of integrated pest management strategies. Project efforts will focus on building the capacity of HPHA and its resident managers to implement integrated pest management strategies. In the next few years, the HSACP will work with HPHA to expand training to other sites and engage community-based agencies to develop culturally tailored materials and outreach training.



Hawaii Public Housing Authority



# Emergency Department Fax Referral System

The emergency departments at Castle Medical Center and Kahuku Medical Center continue to use the emergency department fax referral form developed by the HAI Health Professional Workgroup. The form informs primary care providers when their patients visit the ED for asthma and provides valuable information about people who visit the emergency department for asthma.

To date, the project has reached approximately 248 patients.

- 62% of the participants were female.
- Participants ranged between 0-65 years of age.
- 79% of participants had medical insurance.
- Surprisingly, 72% reported not having a written Asthma Action Plan.
- The majority of the participants were exposed to tobacco smoke; about 60% were living with a smoker, while 26% were active smokers.
- All patients were using rescue medications, and 76% were using controller medications.





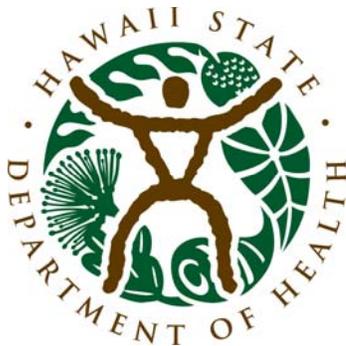
# Hawai'i Smoke-Free Homes Initiative

The HAI Environmental workgroup created two posters to educate bus riders about secondhand smoke and to promote the Hawai'i Smoke-Free Homes Initiative. One poster specifically references secondhand smoke as a trigger for asthma.

Through partnerships with The Bus and the Coalition for Tobacco Free Hawai'i, the posters were displayed on city buses this summer.

The Hawai'i Smoke-Free Homes Initiative also continues to train speakers and advocates to educate condominium owners, landlords, property managers and tenants about developing and adopting smoke-free policies.

For more information about the initiative, visit [www.hawaiismokefreehomes.org](http://www.hawaiismokefreehomes.org).



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