



Latino Asthma Management Program



The Latino Health Initiative (LHI) of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) was established in July 2000 to improve the quality of life of Latinos living in Montgomery County by contributing to the development and implementation of an integrated, coordinated, culturally and linguistically competent health wellness system that supports, values, and respects Latino families and communities.



Description of the Asthma Management Program

Since 2006, the LHI has been implementing an asthma management program aimed and tailored for Spanish-speaking, low-income Latino parents/caregivers of Latino 4-11 year old children diagnosed with asthma and living in Montgomery County, Maryland. The overarching goal is to reduce emergency department visits and hospitalization rates among Latino children in the County by empowering Latino families to appropriately self-manage their children's asthma.

A Community Asthma advisory Committee, composed of experts in Latino health and parents of children with asthma, provides guidance to program activities and carries out asthma advocacy efforts.

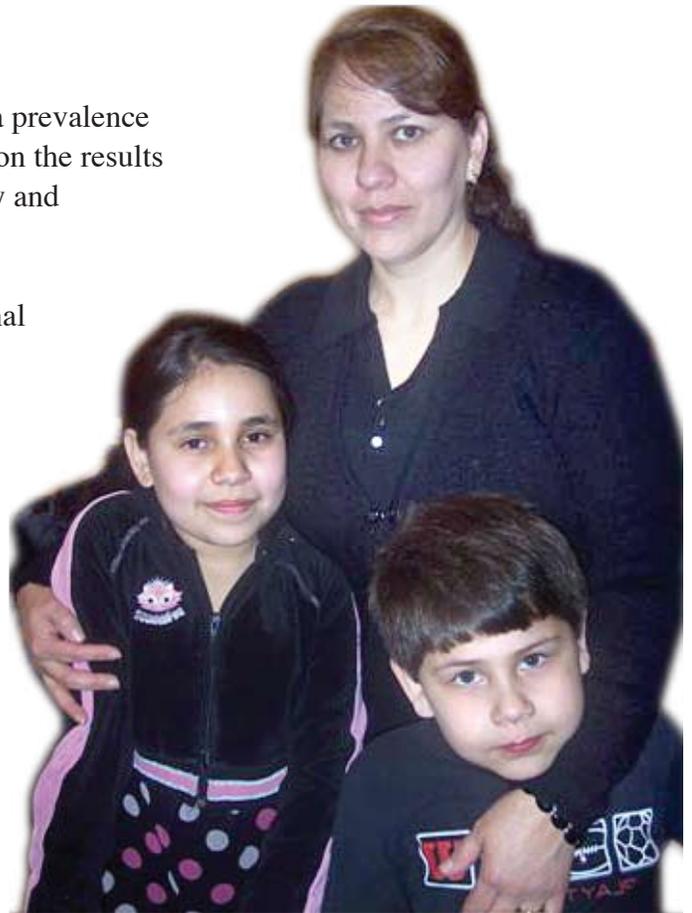
Program Components

In 2005 the LHI conducted an evaluation to assess asthma prevalence and the need for an asthma management program. Based on the results of this formative evaluation, the LHI designed a culturally and linguistically competent educational intervention.

The program incorporates three components: 1) educational group sessions, 2) social support, and 3) follow-up.

1) The asthma educational group sessions

consist of a series of eight two-hour educational group sessions for Latino parents and caregivers of children with asthma based on principles of adult learning and popular education. The focus of the intervention is to contribute to establishing and reinforcing the patient-clinician partnership by highlighting the need for a written action plan, helping participants to reduce exposure to triggers of asthma symptoms, encouraging self-monitoring, improving the use of asthma medicines, supporting family involvement, and promoting an effective communication with health care providers.



A bilingual/bicultural health professional, who uses a detailed curriculum developed specifically for the Program in accordance with the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program; Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma, facilitates the sessions in Spanish.

Each session addresses a specific theme in asthma management and allows ample time for questions, answers, demonstration, practice, and sharing experiences, as well as builds on the previous one, and together, they aim to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and sense of self-efficacy to appropriately manage their children's asthma. Thus, the sessions have both educational and mutual support functions. Audiovisual materials, including video, posters, print materials, anatomical models, and participant handouts complement the learning process. No more than 15 individuals comprise each group, to ensure dynamic exchange among members, and children with asthma actively participate in several sessions.



2) Social support is provided by a group of volunteer trained asthma management coaches (foreign-trained nurses known as Consedus -a combination of the words for counselor and educator in Spanish). Consedus answer questions, identify barriers and issues faced by families and help them to identify solutions to these barriers. Consedus also prevent attrition by reminding participants of the next session and urging them to attend.



3) Follow-up to program participants is provided between educational sessions. Consedus make individualized follow-up phone calls, based on the findings during the sessions. Weekly follow-up continues beyond the duration of the educational sessions. A two-hour follow-up session is conducted 6-9 months after the intervention, to reinforce asthma knowledge, management skills, and encourage adherence to the asthma action plan.

Cost to participate in the asthma program

The asthma educational sessions are at no cost to parents and caregivers. The Program provides supplies for the educational sessions and follow-up activities, such as educational materials, peak flow meters, anti-allergic pillow covers, humidity monitors, and other incentives. Childcare and refreshments are offered during educational sessions.

Educational intervention evaluation and monitoring



The following criteria are used to evaluate and monitor the program:

- Empowerment of Latino families to appropriately self-manage their children's asthma measured by an increase in asthma knowledge, adherence to an asthma action plan, and increase in self-efficacy to manage asthma.
- Reduction in overall morbidity measured by a decrease in emergency department visits, hospitalization, school days missed, and activity restricted due to asthma.

LHI Asthma Management Program

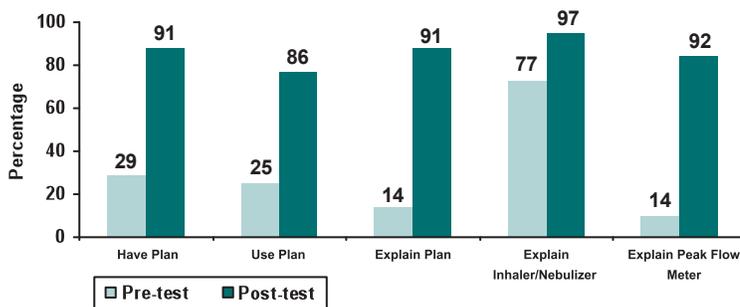
Outcomes 2006 – 2009



From 2006 to 2011, the LHI has offered 21 Asthma Management courses, with 244 parents/caregivers of 251 children with asthma completing all eight sessions. Preliminary data show the effectiveness of the program:

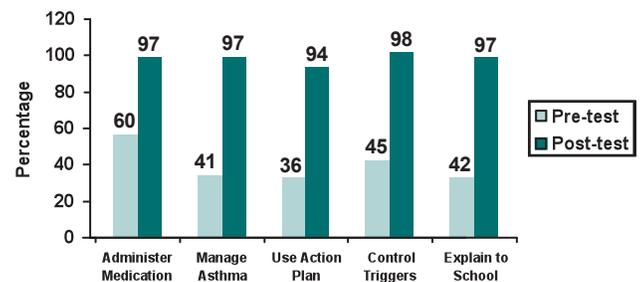
- Improvement in parents knowledge of asthma from **67.7% to 85.5%**
- Decrease in emergency department visits from **27% to 15%**
- Decrease in hospitalization from **8% to 2%**
- Decrease in children’s missed school days from **42% to 29%**
- Decrease in children’s restricted activity from **41% to 26%**

Parents increased capabilities to manage asthma
Percent responding “Yes”



After the intervention, participants made a significant shift in the adherence of their asthma action plan, and most of them improved their capabilities to manage their children’s asthma.

Greater Self-efficacy of Asthma Program Participants
Percent Responding “Fairly Sure” or “Very Sure”



The intervention contributed to an increase in the participants’ self-efficacy for managing asthma. According to parents’ self-report, their confidence in managing their child’s asthma increased in the five components of asthma management.

Lessons learned to date include:

- LHI’s model Asthma Management Program appears to modify parents’ behaviors and remove barriers to learning.
- Language ability, ethnicity, and background of the health educator and counselors are significant and helpful in the program.
- Social and mutual support leverage parents to establish a “friendly network”.
- Education alone is not enough. Improving the home environment to remove asthma triggers is complicated for many parents.

The intervention does not diagnose asthma nor does it prescribe medications or comment on treatments; all clinical/medical concerns raised by participants are referred to the child’s health care provider.

Asthma Management Program
Latino Health Initiative

visit our Website:
<http://www.lhiinfo.org>

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