

# PENNSYLVANIA ASTHMA FACT SHEET

## 2008

### WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a chronic disease characterized by repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and nighttime or early morning coughing. Asthma attacks are caused by lung inflammation and a sudden narrowing of the lung's small airways in response to asthma triggers. Asthma attacks can be mild, or they can become severe, serious and life threatening. The cause of asthma is unknown and no cure exists. However, with appropriate management of asthma (health care, medication, trigger avoidance, etc.) people with asthma can prevent symptoms and attacks, minimize or eliminate time missed from work or school, participate normally in athletic and physical activity and enjoy quality of life.

### ADULT PREVALENCE

- 2006 Adult **Lifetime** Asthma Prevalence (18 and older):
  - Lifetime asthma prevalence for Pennsylvania adults, 18 and older, is approximately 12% (95% CI: 12-13), or about 1.1 million adults. (Pennsylvania 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: BRFSS)
  - Lifetime asthma prevalence for Non-Hispanic African American adults is approximately 16% (95% CI: 13-20) and about 18% (95% CI: 13-25) for Hispanic adults; Non-Hispanic White adults were significantly lower at approximately 12% (95% CI: 11-13). (2006 BRFSS)
  - About 15% (95% CI: 14-16) of female adults have been diagnosed with asthma, which is significantly higher compared to about 10% (95% CI: 8-11) of male adults. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Lifetime Asthma Prevalence by age group: (2006 BRFSS)

Adults age: 18-29	18% (95% CI: 15-21)
30-44	12% (95% CI: 10-13)
45-64	12% (95% CI: 11-13)
65+	9% (95% CI: 8-11)
  - No significant differences were seen for education. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Adults with less than \$15,000 in household income had a statistically significant elevated lifetime asthma prevalence of 22% (95% CI: 19-26) compared to adults with household incomes of \$15,000 or greater. (2006 BRFSS)
- 2006 Adult **Current** Asthma Prevalence (18 and older):
  - Current asthma prevalence for Pennsylvania adults, 18 and older, is approximately 9% (95% CI: 8-9), or about 862,000 adults. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Current asthma prevalence for Non-Hispanic African American adults is approximately 13% (95% CI: 10-16) and about 15% (95% CI: 10-22) for Hispanic adults; Non-Hispanic White adults were significantly lower at approximately 8% (95% CI: 7-9). (2006 BRFSS)
  - About 11% (95% CI: 10-12) of female adults reported currently having asthma, which is significantly higher compared to about 6% (95% CI: 5-7) of males. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Current Asthma Prevalence by age group: (2006 BRFSS)

Adults age: 18-29	12% (95% CI: 10-15)
30-44	8% (95% CI: 7-10)
45-64	8% (95% CI: 7-9)
65+	7% (95% CI: 6-8)
  - Adults with less than a high school education had a higher percentage of current asthma at 12% (95% CI: 10-16) compared to adults with a high school education or a college degree, both at 8% (95% CI: 7-9). (2006 BRFSS)
  - Adults with a household income less than \$15,000 had a statistically significant elevated current asthma prevalence of 16% (95% CI: 14-20) compared to adults with household incomes of \$15,000 or greater. (2006 BRFSS)



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### CHILD PREVALENCE

- Child **Lifetime** Asthma Prevalence (under age 18):
  - Lifetime asthma prevalence for Pennsylvania children, under age 18, is approximately 12% (95% CI: 10-14), which is approximately 343,000 children. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Non-Hispanic African American children had a lifetime asthma prevalence of about 20% (95% CI: 13-31) compared to about 16% (95% CI: 8-28) for Hispanic children and 11% (95% CI: 9-13) for Non-Hispanic White children (2006 BRFSS)
  - Male children had a lifetime asthma prevalence of about 14% (95% CI: 12-18) compared to about 10% (95% CI: 7-13) of female children. (2006 BRFSS)
- Child **Current** Asthma Prevalence (under age 18):
  - Current asthma prevalence for Pennsylvania children, under age 18, is approximately 8% (95% CI: 7-10), which is approximately 229,000 children. (2006 BRFSS)
  - Non-Hispanic African American children had a current asthma prevalence of about 13% (95% CI: 7-22) compared to about 12% (95% CI: 6-24) of Hispanic children and about 7% (95% CI: 6-9) of Non-Hispanic White children. (2006 BRFSS)
  - No significant differences were seen for gender. (2006 BRFSS)

### HOSPITALIZATIONS FACTS

- In Pennsylvania in 2006:
  - Over 23,744 inpatient hospitalizations were due to asthma. (Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council: PHC4)
  - Approximately 19.0 inpatient admissions, for every 10,000 Pennsylvania residents, have a primary discharge diagnosis of asthma. (PHC4)
  - The highest asthma hospitalization rates were in Philadelphia; approximately 55.7 inpatient admissions for every 10,000 residents had a primary discharge diagnosis of asthma, which is almost three times more than the entire state of Pennsylvania. (PHC4)
  - Children younger than 5 in Pennsylvania had the highest asthma hospitalization rate, 47.1 per 10,000, followed by the 65+ group rate of 28.2 per 10,000. (PHC4)
  - Approximately 77% of inpatient admissions with a primary discharge diagnosis of asthma were admitted through the emergency room. (PHC4)
  - Charges for inpatient hospitalizations (not including physician charges) due to asthma total approximately \$445,560,000. (PHC4)
  - The average length of stay for each asthma hospitalization was just over 3.4 days. (PHC4)
  - The average charge for each asthma hospitalization was \$18,765. (PHC4)
  - Age-adjusted asthma hospitalization rates per 10,000 Pennsylvania residents: (PHC4)
 

Males:	15.1	Females:	22.4
Whites:	12.0	African Americans:	61.4
Hispanics:	32.4	Non-Hispanics:	18.5

### MORTALITY FACTS

- In Pennsylvania in 2006, the asthma age-adjusted death rate (asthma as the underlying cause of death) was 1.1 per 100,000. 143 adults and 4 children died with asthma as the underlying cause of death.
- Women (1.3 per 100,000) are 1.6 times more likely to die from asthma than men (0.8 per 100,000).
- African Americans (2.9 /100,000) are more than three times as likely to die from asthma as Whites (0.9 /100,000).
- Death rates in 2005 by race and sex per 100,000 Pennsylvania residents:
 

White Males:	0.6	African American Males:	2.1
White Females:	1.1	African American Females:	3.5

Data Source: Mortality data provided by Vital Statistics, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research, PA Department of Health.