



New Jersey Asthma Awareness and Education Program
Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Services
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Asthma Surveillance in New Jersey

What is surveillance?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have defined public health surveillance as the “ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health-related data essential to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice, closely integrated with the timely dissemination of these data to those responsible for prevention and control.”

Does New Jersey conduct surveillance for asthma?

The Asthma Awareness and Education Program (AAEP) was established by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) with funding through the CDC Cooperative Agreement entitled “Addressing Asthma from a Public Health Perspective.” The mission of the AAEP is to coordinate efforts and enhance capacity in order to reduce the burden of asthma in New Jersey. In support of this mission, a comprehensive surveillance system was established to define and monitor the burden of asthma and related factors. The Occupational Health Surveillance (OHS) Program, within the NJDHSS, conducts surveillance for work-related asthma (WRA) under an occupational health surveillance grant through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

What information is available?

The New Jersey asthma surveillance system currently reports on prevalence, deaths, hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and associated factors. In some cases, these data can be stratified by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and county of residence. Information is also available on work-related asthma including the industries, occupations, and agents that are associated with identified cases in the State.

In 2008, the NJDHSS Center for Health Statistics received funding from the CDC to join 36 other states in implementing the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Asthma Call-Back survey. This supplemental survey collects detailed information from individuals who report a history of asthma on the BRFSS primary survey. As survey data become available in sufficient quantity, the State will be in a better position to characterize children and adults living in New Jersey with asthma and to monitor changes in asthma indicators over time. The comprehensive survey collects data on recent history and symptoms, asthma episodes, health care utilization, knowledge of asthma/asthma management plan, modifications to environment, medications, cost of asthma care, work-related asthma, comorbid conditions, and complementary/alternative therapies.

How can surveillance data be used to support asthma initiatives?

The New Jersey asthma surveillance system can support various initiatives by providing information about the burden of asthma, associated factors, and changes that occur over time. Surveillance data can be used to:

- Plan, implement, and evaluate interventions
- Target interventions and resources to those most in need
- Inform legislation or public policies
- Inform school, work, or other institutionally based policies
- Inform clinical practice
- Revise the goals, objectives, or activities of a program or organization
- Generate hypotheses or stimulate research activities
- Provide support for funding proposals
- Communicate information about asthma

Who can I contact for more information about asthma surveillance?

For information about asthma surveillance:

New Jersey Asthma Awareness and Education Program

www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/asthma/index.shtml

For information about work-related asthma surveillance:

New Jersey Occupational Health Surveillance Program

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/survweb/wra/index.shtml>

For information about national asthma surveillance:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthmadata.htm>

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