



May 2 is World Asthma Day

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Health joins state and federal public health partners in recognizing May as ‘Asthma Awareness Month’ and urges New Mexicans to learn more about asthma control to improve the lives of all people with asthma.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases in New Mexico. An estimated 150,000 adults and 47,000 children in New Mexico have asthma, a chronic lifelong disease that affects the lungs. Asthma can cause wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. In 2016, there were over 7,000 emergency department visits in the state related to asthma.

“Although there is no cure for asthma, through quality health care, appropriate medications, and good self-management skills, it is possible to manage the disease to reduce and prevent asthma attacks,” NMDOH Cabinet Secretary Lynn Gallagher said. “When asthma is controlled, people with the disease have few, if any, symptoms, and can live normal and productive lives.”

Asthma attacks, or episodes, cause adults to miss work and children to miss school. These dangerous and sometimes life-threatening episodes reduce the quality of life for people with asthma. People with asthma can prevent asthma attacks if they learn how to avoid asthma triggers like tobacco smoke, mold, outdoor air pollution, and colds and flu. Asthma episodes can also be prevented by using inhalers and other prescribed daily long-term control medicines correctly.

NMDOH offers tips for Asthma Awareness Month

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Asthma is costly, with expenses from routine checkups, emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and medications putting a significant burden on families, the health care sector, and the economy. Each year in New Mexico, there are an estimated \$210 million in asthma medical costs and almost \$21 million due to lost work days.

NMDOH collaborates with communities and partners across the state including the New Mexico Council on Asthma (COA) to develop strategies to improve and expand the reach of comprehensive asthma control services.

For asthma education resources or to learn more about statewide strategic initiatives, visit the NMDOH Asthma Control Program, or the New Mexico Council on Asthma.

The New Mexico Environmental Health Tracking Program also provides data on asthma and air quality.

To learn more about asthma control and management, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asthma page at www.cdc.gov/asthma.