

New Mexico Asthma Control Program

Partnering with Communities to Reduce the Burden of Asthma

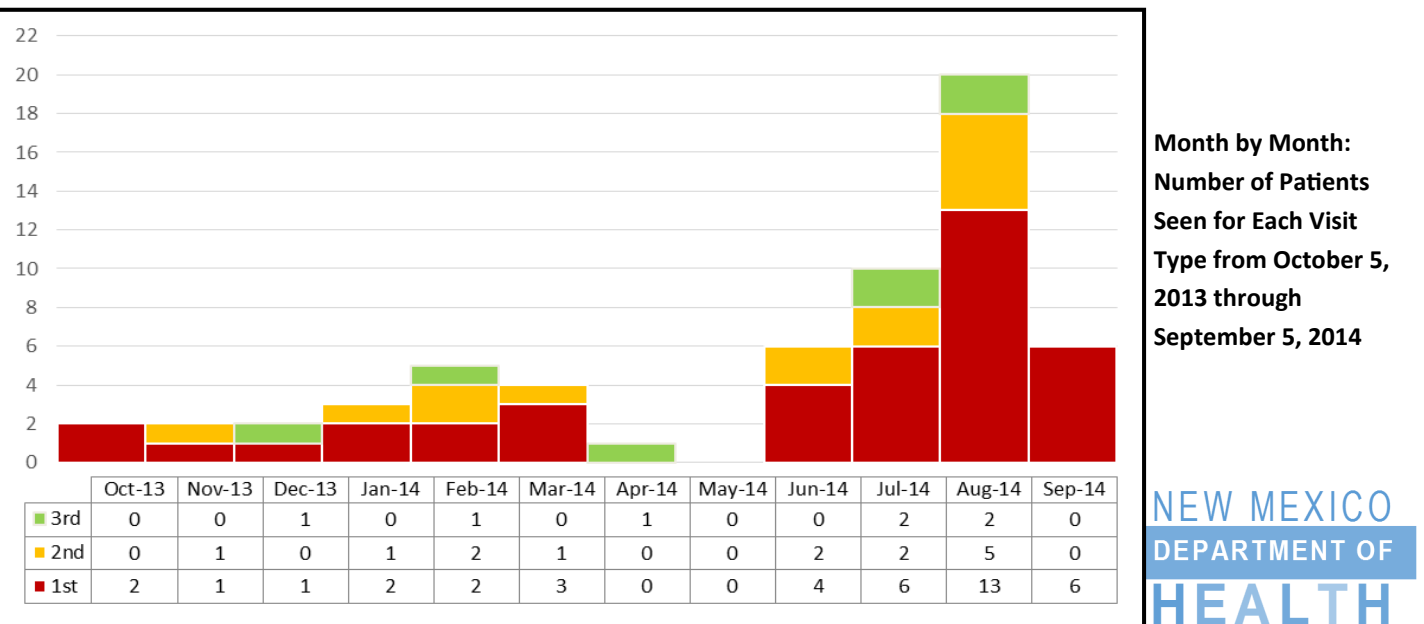
Positive Results from Asthma Self-Management Education Program at Nor-Lea General Hospital Funded by NMACP

In 2011, the New Mexico Asthma Control Program (NMACP) partnered with Nor-Lea General Hospital (NLGH) in Lovington, NM to develop a program of patient self-management education for people with asthma. A pilot program (March-April 2011) was followed by a year (September 2011-August 2012) of program services being offered. The University of New Mexico (UNM) Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) provided training and technical assistance to the pilot program staff. Due to budget and staffing issues, the program was discontinued in in 2012. However, strong support among program stakeholders and evidence of how well it worked resulted in the renewal of the program in the fall of 2013, with funding from the NMACP.

Three NLGH staff members (two respiratory therapists and a nurse) in the Cardio-Pulmonary Rehabilitation Unit provide asthma self-management education (ASME) in English and Spanish for patients and caregivers (the mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts or uncles who take care of a child who has asthma). Asthma patients are usually identified and referred for self-management education by NLGH staff, although they may be referred by someone else, for example, the doctors who see asthma patients through Children’s Medical Services (CMS) asthma clinics.

The asthma educators at NLGH contact and schedule visits with patients. An initial session with the asthma educator lasts 90 minutes. Second visits are usually scheduled two to four weeks after the initial visit, with a third follow-up visit three months afterwards. However, scheduling is flexible to accommodate patients’ needs.

Patients and their caregivers participated in 61 ASME sessions, and Spanish language translation was provided for 48% of them. Forty patients completed one ASME session; and of those, 14 returned for a second session, and 7 for a third. Over 90 percent of referrals came from NLGH clinics, with 36 patients (82% of total) referred by Dr. Sonia Murillo, the NLGH pediatrician, who has championed the program since it began. Most patients (80%) were between the ages of four and eleven. There were more male patients than female ones (65% vs 35%) and the majority of patients were Hispanic (80%).



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Asthma Self-Management Education

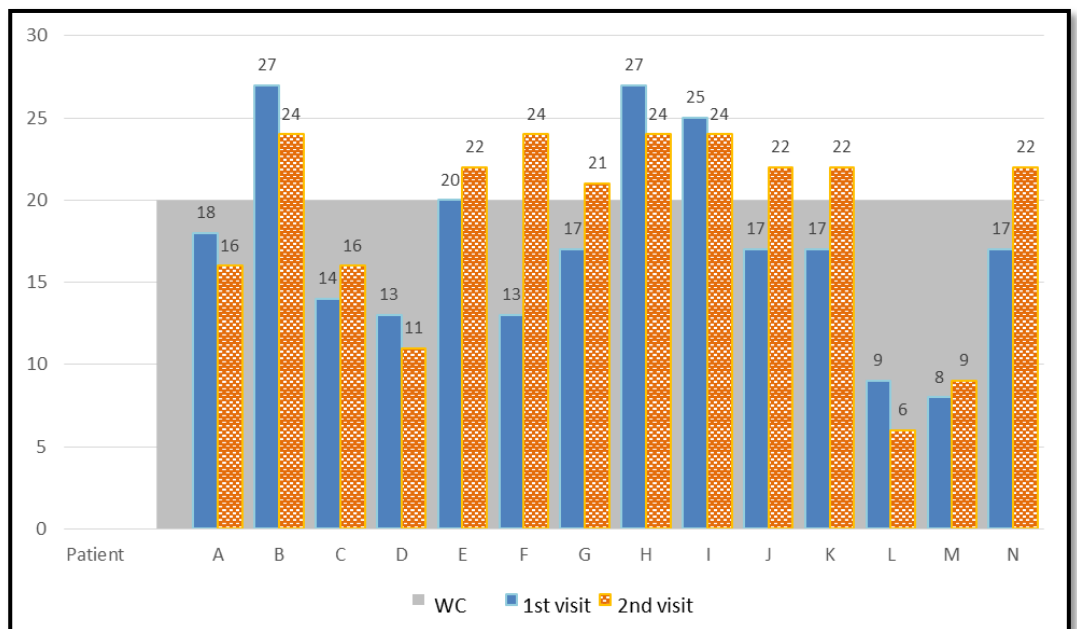
The content and delivery of the ASME sessions follow the 2007 National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) Guidelines by having ASME taught by health professionals trained in asthma self-management, being clinic-based, using an Asthma Action Plan (AAP), developing partnerships with patients and families, and by introducing key messages and essential skills at the very first session. At the beginning of their first session, only a small number of patients and caregivers were confident and competent in demonstrating important asthma self-management knowledge and skills, such as using their inhaler properly, understanding when they should take different medicines, how to follow their Asthma Action Plan (AAP), and how to recognize and avoid triggers that cause their asthma to get worse. After participating in ASME, many more patients and their caregivers understood these things. For example, the number of caregivers able to explain asthma triggers went from five (13%) to 35 (88%) after the first session.

Patient Physical Health: The Asthma Control Test

Asthma educators in the NLGH program use the Asthma Control Test (ACT), a short list of multiple-choice questions, to measure how much asthma is affecting their patients' lives. Scores at or above 20 mean the patient's asthma is "well controlled," allowing the patient to do everything they need and want to do (for example, sleep through the night or play sports). For younger children (ages 4 to 11 years) the AE-Cs use the Childhood Asthma Control Test (C-ACT) which combines questions for the patient with questions for their adult caregiver.

Patient ACT Scores for 1st and 2nd Visits (ACT ≥ 20, "well controlled" asthma)

Among the 14 patients who completed a second visit, only four (29%) had ACT scores indicating their asthma was well-controlled at the first visit. At the second visit, the number of participants with



well-controlled asthma increased to nine out of 14 patients (64%), leaving only five not well controlled.

Since 2011, when this asthma self-management education program was originally developed, the NMACP has supported Nor-Lea General Hospital's commitment to improving asthma care and empowering patients and caregivers to manage their chronic disease, reducing their need to access emergency care and improving their quality of life. The results from 2013-14 continue to support the value of this program to everyone involved.

To learn more about NLGH, its mission and programs, visit www.nor-lea.org. For a brief report on the ASME program or to find out more about the NMACP and its asthma resources for NM, visit our website at <http://nmhealth.org/about/erd/eheb/ap/>

Note from an Asthma Educator (August 2014): Mother was very eager to learn and very happy that this program exists. Her daughter has had asthma since she was three years old and she has never before today [more than 10 years later] had an understanding of what asthma really is.

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