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RESPIRATORY HEALTH ASSOCIATION℠
of Metropolitan Chicago

Chicago Asthma Epidemic
The status of Asthma in Chicago

- More than half (58%) of all children with asthma in Chicago had a severe asthma attack in the past year and nearly one-third (31%) had an asthma attack so bad they thought their life was in danger.
- As many as 23% of children in Chicago with asthma avoided activities due to their asthma, while only four percent of children without asthma avoided activities for any health reasons.
- In Chicago, 54% of children with asthma have experienced daytime, nighttime or exercise-induced asthma symptoms.[1]
- In 2002, 117 people died of asthma, 12 of whom were children.[2,]
- In Cook County, 317,906 adults and 121,610 children have been diagnosed with asthma.[3]
- The asthma hospitalization rate in Chicago is nearly double the national average.[4,5]
- Puerto Rican children have the highest asthma prevalence rate (34%) compared to the national average of 10%.[6]
- Asthma is the number one cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic illness among children.[7]
- Age-adjusted asthma mortality in Chicago was nearly <u>five times</u> higher in non-Hispanic blacks than in non-Hispanic whites.[8]
- Death rates from asthma are particularly high for African Americans and Hispanics (four to six times higher than for Caucasians), and are concentrated in urban areas, including Chicago.[9]
- As many as 59% of children (0-12) diagnosed with asthma in certain Chicago neighborhoods live with a smoker despite secondhand smoke being a major asthma trigger.[6]

1 Regional Survey Data, Children & Asthma in America. (2004). GlaxoSmithKline. .
2 Chicago Department of Public Health
3 Adult and Pediatric Asthma numbers are taken from a variety of sources; The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), United States Census 2000 and National Health Interview Survey, 2001 (NHIS)
4 National Health Interview Survey. 1998. (Provided by Dr. Sandra Thomas, Chicago Department of Public Health.)
5 Mannino et. al. (2002). "Surveillance for Asthma – United States, 1980-1999." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. CDC.
6 Sinai Health System, Sinai Urban Health Institute. (2004) *Improving Community Health Survey Report 1*
7NCES (2001). "Condition of Education". U.S. Department of Education.
8Thomas, S.D., Whitman, S. (1999). "Asthma Hospitalizations and Mortality in Chicago, An Epidemiologic Overview" *CHEST, 116 , 4.*
9 Sheffer, Albert, M.D. "Fatal Asthma". Partners Asthma Center. From www.asthma.partners.org.

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