



RESPIRATORY HEALTH IN MICHIGAN

In 2015, 10.2% of adults in Michigan and 9.2% of adults in the US reported currently having asthma¹, which makes Michigan's asthma rate 10% higher in comparison to the national average. In 2015, 7.7% or 169,617 Michigan children reported currently having asthma.

- **What is asthma?** Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs. It is one of the most common diseases impacting children, but adults can have asthma, too. Asthma can cause wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, chest tightness, and disturbed sleep. People with asthma are very sensitive to pollutants released from coal-fired power plants, industry, and the transportation sector, including particulate matter (soot), ozone (smog), sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, arsenic, mercury, and lead.
- **What triggers asthma?** While the development of asthma seems to have a genetic component, outside factors are what set off, or trigger, asthma attacks. Air pollution is a major trigger. The pollution generated by Michigan's coal-fired power plants is responsible for over 68,000 asthma attacks and more than 180 premature deaths each year.
- Asthma attacks are expensive and disruptive. Sometimes an attack requires emergency treatment and hospitalization, forcing an asthma sufferer to miss school or work. There are nearly **14,000 asthma-related hospitalizations**² each year in Michigan. In 2006, the average cost of an asthma hospitalization in Michigan was \$11,671.³ Add it all up and take into consideration that this cost has almost certainly gone up, and we spend well over \$163 million per year on asthma hospitalizations.
- **Climate change** Warmer weather can increase levels of ozone and allergens that cause asthma attacks. The Michigan Department of Community Health is preparing for the expected increased asthma and respiratory illness due to Michigan's changing climate. Warmer temperatures promote the production of harmful ground level ozone, a known asthma trigger.
- **Ozone** Each year in Michigan, there are an estimated 275 deaths and over 640 serious illnesses related to exposure to ozone air pollution. Air pollution from ozone is also responsible for over half a million lost productivity days per year for Michigan residents, meaning Michiganders are missing work and school due to poor air quality.⁴

A Healthier and Cleaner Future is Possible

We need policies that put Michigan on track to be an industry leader in clean energy, create jobs, and give us healthier air. Transitioning to clean energy sources and being more energy efficient will improve health, lower health care costs, and save lives.

Here are two ways we can get there:

1. Tell your Michigan legislators that we can and should think of ways to increase the amount of renewable energy and energy efficiency we use in our state. After all, our energy policy can protect our health.
2. Engage with the MPSC during public comment periods to ensure that protecting Michigan's public health is a priority and that Michigan utilities maximize all economically feasible energy efficiency opportunities.



ABOUT MI AIR, MI HEALTH

The MI Air, MI Health Coalition works to ensure that all Michigan communities have clean, healthy air. We organize health professionals to advocate for policies that improve outdoor air quality, and improve a range of health impacts caused by unhealthy outdoor air and climate change, and reduce the healthcare costs we bear because of unhealthy, outdoor air.

To learn more, visit miairmihealth.org



ASTHMA AND ALLERGY

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America-Michigan Chapter (AAFA-MI) has been a trusted source for information, education, and training since 1984. AAFA is the leading patient organization for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy patient group in the world. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for people with asthma and allergic diseases by promoting awareness through education and training.

**To learn more, refer to the website:
Aafamich.org**

¹ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/2015_MiBRFS_Standard_Tables_8.29.16_535667_7.pdf

² http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/MichiganAsthmaStatistics_516687_7.pdf

³ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/10_Ch8_Hospitalization_for_Asthma_274059_7.pdf

⁴ <http://www.thoracic.org/about/newsroom/press-releases/journal/health-of-air-report.pdf>



miairmihealth.org



facebook.com/MIAirMIHealth



twitter.com/MIAirMIHealth