

## Respiratory, 2012

Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are examples of respiratory diseases that are significant public health issues. The burden of respiratory disease falls not just on the people who have them, but also on their families, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and society as a whole. Both genetic and environmental factors, such as exposure to cigarette smoke, play a role in who gets certain respiratory diseases and how those diseases progress.<sup>1</sup>

Asthma is the most common childhood chronic condition in the United States and the leading chronic cause of children being absent from school.<sup>2</sup> Asthma rates are higher among people living in the northeastern United States;<sup>1</sup> in 2011, the prevalence of current asthma among adults in Maine was higher than in any other state.<sup>3</sup> Chronic lower respiratory disease, which includes COPD and asthma, is the third leading cause of death among Maine residents.<sup>4</sup>

Respiratory-related measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:<sup>5</sup>

- Adults with current asthma
- Asthma among children
- Asthma/bronchitis emergency department visits
- Chronic lower respiratory disease deaths
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) hospital discharges

Measures related to risk factors for respiratory diseases can be found in other areas of the State Health Assessment, including Tobacco Use and Environmental Health.

Estimates for respiratory health related measures included in the State Health Assessment vary across population groups in Maine. For example, current asthma among Maine children is significantly more common among males than females, while among Maine adults current asthma is more common among females than males. Among Maine adults, current asthma is significantly more common among those



who identify themselves as non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native or non-Hispanic Multiracial than among non-Hispanic White adults. The rates of asthma/bronchitis emergency department visits, COPD hospitalizations, and chronic lower respiratory disease deaths are all significantly higher among residents of Somerset and Washington Counties than among Mainers overall.<sup>5</sup>

Healthy Maine 2020 also has respiratory-related objectives, including:<sup>6</sup>

- Reduce hospital emergency department visits for asthma
- Reduce emergency department visits for work-related asthma
- Reduce the use of any tobacco products among students
- Reduce cigarette smoking among students
- Increase the percentage of youth who reported never having smoked in their life
- Reduce tobacco use by adults
- Increase abstinence from cigarette smoking among pregnant women
- Increase the proportion of persons with a diagnosis of depression or anxiety who do not smoke
- Reduce the number of days the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds 100

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. Respiratory diseases: overview. Available from: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=36> (accessed 6/5/2013).
- <sup>2</sup> Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Asthma facts and figures. Available from: [http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=42#\\_ftn2](http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=42#_ftn2) (accessed 6/5/2013).
- <sup>3</sup> American Lung Association. Trends in asthma morbidity and mortality. Issued September 2012. Available from: <http://www.lung.org/finding-cures/our-research/trend-reports/asthma-trend-report.pdf> (accessed 6/5/2013).
- <sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading\\_causes\\_death.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html) (accessed 6/5/2013).
- <sup>5</sup> Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State health assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 6/5/2013).
- <sup>6</sup> Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Maine 2020. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/index.shtml>.