

# Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

## Issue: Asthma



### Why is Asthma Important?

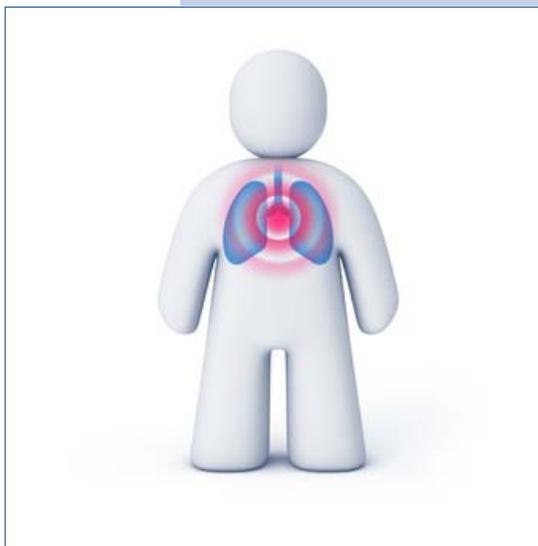
Asthma is a lung disease. Asthma affects all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities. It occurs when the airways of the lungs (called bronchial tubes) shrink and become inflamed, allowing less air to get into and out of the lungs and making breathing difficult. The result is wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in the chest, and early morning or nighttime coughing.

The exact cause of asthma is unknown. Asthma triggers include exercise, drugs, viral infections, or things in the environment that bother the lungs, including dust mites, pet dander, mold, pollen, tobacco smoke, air pollution, and household cleaners.

### How Does Asthma Affect Us Locally?

The Minnesota Department of Health estimates 302,000 Minnesota adults and 90,000 Minnesota children have asthma in 2010.<sup>1</sup> The 2010 SHAPE survey of Hennepin County residents estimates that 6.7 percent of adults and 9.2 percent of children have asthma.

Between 2008 and 2010, the asthma hospitalization rate for residents in zip code 55404 (which includes northern Phillips) and 55407 (which includes southern Phillips) were 27.7 and 20.0 per 10,000 people. These rates are some of the highest in the state and much higher than the county average of 10.1 asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 people.<sup>2</sup>



### Health Impacts

- Asthma is a life-long condition that can be controlled, but not cured, by following an asthma action plan, controlling exposure to triggers, and using asthma medication.
- For some, asthma can be a daily battle; others may have occasional episodes or may react to specific triggers (such as exercising).
- Asthma sufferers see the doctor and go to the emergency room more frequently.

### Environmental Impacts

- Air pollution and other environmental factors can trigger asthma attacks.

### Financial Impacts

- More than 14 million school days are lost each year in the US due to asthma. [American Lung Association]
- The costs of asthma are reflected through higher health premiums, medication costs, clinic and emergency room visits, and hospitalizations.
- Lost work due to asthma episodes can reduce household income.

### Hiawatha CARE Project Partners

Alexander's Import Auto Repair	Hennepin County	Minnesota Department of Health
American Lung Association of Minnesota	Hennepin - University Partnership	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Blue Construction	Little Earth of United Tribes	Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
City of Minneapolis	Longfellow Business Association	Preventing Harm Minnesota
East Phillips Improvement Coalition	Longfellow Community Council	St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota	Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church & Longfellow Lutheran parishes	US Environmental Protection Agency
Gardening Matters	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Women's Environmental Institute

# Hiawatha CARE Project - A project of Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works

## What Can Individuals Do?

- Know the warning signs of an asthma attack, stay away from things that trigger an attack, and follow the advice of medical professionals.
- Prevent or eliminate asthma triggers, such as mold, secondhand smoke, and household chemicals.
- Burn wood safely.
- Use protective mattress and pillow covers and HEPA vacuums and air cleaners.
- Focus on the child's bedroom to have at least one location with minimized asthma triggers.
- Do not smoke in your home and car and do not allow family or visitors to do so.
- Avoid outside activity on days when air quality is unhealthy.

## What Can the Community Do?

- Continue education to encourage parents and caregivers to protect children from secondhand smoke and other asthma triggers.
- Support asthma-friendly schools initiatives.

## What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Continue to educate health care professionals and the public about actions to reduce exposures to asthma triggers and to collect data for evaluating asthma trends.
- Continue to track ambient air pollutants including ozone and particulate matter.
- Continue to track asthma hospitalizations to aid in identifying populations vulnerable to asthma triggers.
- Encourage local parks and playgrounds to become tobacco-free.

## For More Information

American Lung Association:  
[www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/](http://www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/asthma/](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/)

City of Minneapolis:  
[www.minneapolismn.gov/neighborhoods/](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/neighborhoods/)

Hennepin County SHAPE survey:  
[www.hennepin.us](http://www.hennepin.us) [search: SHAPE]

Minnesota Department of Health:  
[apps.health.state.mn.us/mndata/asthma](http://apps.health.state.mn.us/mndata/asthma)

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency:  
[aqi.pca.state.mn.us/](http://aqi.pca.state.mn.us/)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:  
[www.epa.gov/asthma/](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/)

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Health, Asthma Program, unpublished 2011 Asthma in Minnesota Report (2010 data).

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Health Asthma Program, 5/17/12

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## What is the CARE Project?

The Hiawatha CARE Project is a new effort to address environmental toxins in western Longfellow and East Phillips. The project brings together two dozen business, community, government, and non-profit agencies in a community-

driven effort to identify, prioritize, and address environmental risks in the area.

The project was initiated in December 2010 when Hennepin County received a \$100,000 Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) award from the

US Environmental Protection Agency. The CARE program supports local collaborations to reduce toxins in the local community.

## More Information:

[www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care](http://www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care)  
612.348.9344.