



GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR SCHOOLS: **Raising Awareness about Emergency Stock Asthma Medication Programs**

Asthma remains one of the most common chronic diseases among children, significantly impacting school attendance and student performance. Implementing a stock asthma medication program is a significant step toward safeguarding the health of students with asthma. However, schools often face several barriers, including raising awareness about the program among school personnel and families.

In 2023, the American Lung Association convened experts in asthma management in schools to discuss barriers to implement stock asthma medication programs. Some of the barriers that schools face when establishing and maintaining a stock asthma medication program include:

- Lack of awareness among key stakeholders including pharmacies and pharmacists, parents and caregivers, school administrators, school nurses and school personnel, and the community.
- Getting buy-in from key groups such as school boards and administrators, nurses, parents and caregivers, and pharmacies and pharmacists.
- Need for effective communication tools.

Below are a list of key solutions and strategies identified by the group to help schools raise awareness and effectively implement these programs.

Step 1: Build Awareness and Buy-In from Key Groups

When it comes to implementing a stock asthma medication program in schools, you will need buy-in from a few key groups. Each of these stakeholders play a strategic role in implementing a successful program. Here's how:

Schools Boards and Administrators. Support from Schools Boards and Administrators is crucial. Their support is essential for policy implementation and potential funding for the program.

- Conduct targeted presentations at school board meetings to inform and engage decision-makers.
- Share testimonials from nurses and parents who have benefited from the program.
- Consider utilizing school administrators that have already implemented stock asthma medication programs as peer-to-peer examples.
- Address potential concerns about liability and costs upfront, providing clear information on legal protections and potential funding sources.



School Nurses. These health professionals are on the frontline of administering asthma medications in schools.

- Organize nurse conferences and workshops to provide information and training on stock asthma medication programs.
- Distribute educational materials and guidelines.
- Provide comprehensive training on recognizing asthma symptoms, administering medication, and managing emergencies.

Parents and Caregivers. There is often little to no awareness about the existence of stock asthma medication programs and the benefits among parents and caregivers. Their support can help drive program acceptance.

- Present at “Back to School Nights” or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to explain the program’s benefits.
- Host interactive sessions where parents and caregivers can ask questions and get hands-on experience with asthma devices. These sessions can be paired with school events like open houses and parent-teacher conferences.
- Share success stories and testimonials to build trust and support.
- Establish a group of parent and student ambassadors who can advocate for the program.
- Establish a system for collecting feedback from parents, students, and staff about the program. Use this feedback to make continuous improvements and address any concerns.
- Emphasize that the program benefits all students, including those who may not know they have asthma and could experience their first attack at school.

Pharmacies and Pharmacists. There is often little to no awareness among pharmacies and pharmacists about stock asthma medication laws and policies, which contributes to some schools not being able to obtain medication to support their programs.

- Reach out through state or national professional pharmacy associations and local pharmacy networks.
- Provide clear information about the state stock asthma medication law in your state and the role pharmacies play in supporting schools, including liability protection if applicable.

Partnerships with Local Healthcare Providers.

- Collaborate with local hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers to support the program. These partners can offer financial assistance, resources, and expertise.



- Provide information on liability protection healthcare providers have when writing prescription in the name of the school under the state stock asthma medication law, if applicable.

Step 2: Develop and Disseminate Tools

- Create comprehensive talk points and presentations tailored for each target audience, (e.g., School Boards and Administrators, Nurses, Parents & Caregivers, and Pharmacies and Pharmacists). Use these presentations in various forums to ensure widespread dissemination of information. Get access to a sample presentation in the American Lung Association's Stock Asthma Medication: Implementation Guidance for Schools course.
- Develop a detailed communication plan that includes regular updates through newsletters, emails, and social media to keep the school community informed about the program's availability and benefits.
- Use multiple channels to reach different stakeholders effectively. For example, consider presentations at nurse conferences, PTA meetings, School Board meetings, or through pharmacy networks. Work with local newspapers, TV stations, and radio to feature stories about the school's stock asthma medication program. Highlight its benefits and success stories to reach a broader audience.
- Conduct workshops and school assemblies to educate students, parents, and staff about asthma, the importance of the stock medication program, and how to respond to asthma emergencies. Emphasize that not all students with asthma are aware of their condition and may experience their first attack at school, underscoring the necessity of stock asthma medications.

BENEFITS OF STOCK ASTHMA MEDICATION PROGRAMS

- IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING MEDICATION FOR ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE EXPERIENCING THEIR FIRST ASTHMA ATTACK
- REDUCED EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS
- IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
- ENHANCED PEACE OF MIND FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND SCHOOL STAFF
- POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS FOR FAMILIES AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

For more information on management asthma in schools, please visit

[Lung.org/asthma-in-schools](https://www.lung.org/asthma-in-schools).

This document serves as a starting point for implementing a Stock Asthma Medication Program in schools. It is intended to provide general guidance and should not be considered as legal or medical advice. Always consult with healthcare professionals and legal advisors to tailor the program to your school's specific needs and ensure compliance with local and state regulations.