



GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR SCHOOLS:

Obtaining Standing Orders, Quick-Relief Inhalers, and Valved-Holding Chambers for 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 the procurement of standing orders, quick-relief inhalers (such as albuterol), and valved-holding chambers (also referred to as spacers).

In 2023, the American Lung Association convened experts in asthma management in schools to discuss barriers to implement stock asthma medication programs. Below are a few key strategies identified by the group to obtain standing orders, quick-relief inhalers and supplies.

By following these steps, schools can ensure they are prepared to respond effectively to emergency situations.

Step 1: Understanding Legal Requirements and Framework

- ❑ **Review State and Local Regulations.** Each state and locality may have different laws and guidelines regarding the storage and administration of medication in schools. It is important to understand these regulations to ensure compliance.
- ❑ **Consult Legal Counsel.** Seek advice from legal counsel or the school district's legal department to understand liability issues and the scope of practice for school nurses and other staff.

Step 2: Obtaining Standing Orders

- ❑ **Identify a Licensed Prescriber.** Find a healthcare provider, such as a pediatrician, family medicine doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, pediatric pulmonologist, allergists/immunologist, or medical director of state government agencies who can issue a standing order for the school. This may require outreach to local healthcare systems, school-based health centers (SBHCs), or federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) within the district.
- ❑ **Draft the Standing Order.** Use templates (e.g., American Lung Association Stock Asthma Medication in Schools Toolkit) or examples from school districts (e.g., Arizona, Illinois) as a guide. The standing order should specify the medication (i.e., albuterol), dosage, and circumstances under which it can be administered.
- ❑ **Review and Approval.** Ensure the standing order is reviewed and approved by the necessary school district officials and legal advisors, such as asthma School District Superintendent, School Board, District Health Services Coordinator or District Legal Counsel.
- ❑ **Obtain Signature.** The authorized licensed prescriber should sign the standing order.



- **Annual Renewal.** Standing orders will need to be renewed and signed by the licensed prescriber each school year.

Step 3: Acquiring Quick-Relief Inhalers and Valved-Holding Chambers

- **Explore Procurement Options.** Contact pharmaceutical companies, local pharmacies, medical supply vendors, or non-profits to explore options for purchasing, discounted rates, or obtaining donations of albuterol inhalers and valved-holding chambers.
 - **Pharmaceutical companies** often have programs specifically designed to support healthcare initiatives in educational and community settings. They may offer discounts for bulk purchases or provide specific programs for schools to access medications at a lower cost.
 - **Local pharmacies** may offer discounts to schools as part of community service efforts or through negotiated agreements, especially if there is an ongoing relationship or a long-term contract involved.
 - **Health advocacy groups and non-profits** focused on respiratory health might facilitate access to discounted medications through their partnerships with pharmaceutical companies or through special purchasing programs.
- **Negotiate Purchases or Donations.** Work with suppliers to negotiate the purchase or donation of these items. Ensure that any agreements comply with school procurement policies and legal requirements.
- **Implement a Replenishment System.** Establish a system for monitoring stock levels and expiration dates, ensuring a continuous supply of medication and devices.

Step 4: Training and Education

- **Develop Training Programs.** Organize training sessions for school staff on [recognizing asthma symptoms](#), the use of quick-relief inhalers and valved-holding chambers, and emergency response protocols. Consider the following:
 - **Frequency:** Conduct training at the beginning of each school year and mid-year refresher courses.
 - **Trainers:** Partner with local healthcare providers, asthma educators, or organizations specializing in asthma education to conduct these sessions.



- **Participants:** Include all school staff, not just health professionals.
- **Educational Materials for the School Community.** Create informational materials for students, parents, and staff about the Emergency Stock Medication Program, including how and when it will be used.

Step 5: Storage and Accessibility

- **Designate Storage Areas.** Medications and devices should be stored in secure, yet easily accessible locations within the school. Ensure that all storage conditions (e.g., temperature) meet the requirements specified by the medication manufacturers.
- **Maintain Records.** Keep detailed records of medication and device inventory, usage, and student incidents requiring emergency medication. This documentation is crucial for monitoring the program's effectiveness and for compliance purposes.

Step 6: Program Evaluation and Sustainability

- **Regular Review and Assessment.** Implement a process for regularly reviewing the program's effectiveness, including feedback from staff, students, and parents. Assess the need for adjustments or additional training.
- **Seek Ongoing Support.** Explore opportunities for ongoing funding or donations to sustain the program. This may include grants, community partnerships, or school budget allocations.

Resources

- Visit the [Asthma Medication in Schools](#) page on Lung.org to find information about your state law and access resources.
- Participate in the American Lung Association's [Stock Asthma Medication: Implementation Guidance for Schools](#) course.
- Download the American Lung Association's [Stock Asthma Medication Toolkit](#) or the [AAAAI Stock Inhaler Toolkit for Schools](#).

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.