Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs and airways. Asthma causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing at night or early in the morning. There is no cure for asthma but it can be controlled with medication and by avoiding breathing in substances that irritate the lungs.

**Burden of Asthma Among Adults and Children in Maine**

One in nine Mainers, more than 146,000 people, currently has asthma.

Left poorly-managed or uncontrolled, asthma can lead to emergency department visits, hospitalization or death. In Maine, asthma is responsible for an estimated $14.3 million in lost productivity and nearly $173 million in direct medical costs each year.

Poorly controlled asthma contributes to roughly 8,100 emergency department visits, 950 hospitalizations and 13 deaths among Mainers each year.

**Prevalence of Current Asthma, 2011-2013**

The prevalence of current asthma is significantly higher among Maine adults than U.S. adults, while the prevalence among Maine children is similar to U.S. children.

The percentage of Maine adults with current asthma (11.7 percent) is significantly higher than the percentage among U.S. adults (8.9 percent).

The percentage of Maine children with current asthma (9.1 percent) is similar to the percentage among U.S. children (8.9 percent).
**Asthma Control, 2006-2010**

**Too few Mainers have well-controlled asthma.**

In Maine, seven in ten children (71.2 percent) and one in two adults (50.2 percent) with asthma have asthma that is well-controlled (based on their reports of symptoms, nighttime awakenings and use of rescue medications).

**Asthma can be controlled.**

Asthma can be controlled with routine medical care, medications and patient education.

**Asthma Management, 2006-2010**

**Too few Mainers with asthma are seeing their doctors regularly, are taking controller medicine or have an asthma action plan to know what to do in case of an asthma attack.**

**Routine asthma visit** – Less than one-third of adults and children (29.0 percent and 31.5 percent, respectively) with asthma has seen their doctor for a routine asthma visit at least twice in the past year.

**Asthma controller medicine** - Less than half of Maine adults and children (40.1 percent and 41.9 percent, respectively) with asthma are currently taking a controller medicine.

**Asthma action plan** - Nearly six in ten children with asthma (58.9 percent) have an asthma action plan, but only three in ten adults (31.3 percent) with asthma have one.
Missed Work, Activity, and School Days, 2006-2010

Missed work, activity and school days are consequences of poorly controlled asthma.

One in five employed Maine adults with asthma (21.0 percent) report being unable to work or carry out usual activities for one or more days in the past year because of their asthma. Among all Maine adults with asthma, 12.4 percent report being unable to work or carry out usual activities for six or more days in the past year because of asthma. More than one in three Maine children with asthma (39.6 percent) missed one or more school or daycare days due to asthma in the past year.

Emergency Department Visits Due to Asthma, 2011

Each year, more than 8,000 emergency department (ED) visits of Maine residents are due to asthma.

Maine's age-adjusted asthma ED visit rate is 66.2 per 10,000 population. There are significant differences in ED visit rates across Maine’s public health districts. Rates range from a high of 114.6 per 10,000 in Aroostook District to a low of 51.5 per 10,000 in Midcoast and Penquis districts. Maine females have significantly higher asthma ED rates than males (73.5 vs. 58.2 per 10,000, respectively).

Asthma Hospitalizations, 2011

Asthma is the primary reason for nearly 950 hospitalizations of Maine residents annually.

Maine’s age-adjusted asthma hospitalization rate is 7.0 per 10,000 population. There are significant differences across public health districts. Rates range from a high of 10.8 per 10,000 in Western District to a low of 4.8 per 10,000 in Cumberland District. Maine females have significantly higher asthma hospitalization rates than males (8.2 vs. 5.6 per 10,000, respectively).
Asthma causes an average of 13 deaths in Maine each year.

Over the past decade, up to 16 people died due to asthma each year in Maine (with asthma being the primary cause of death) and the age-adjusted asthma death rate for this period was 0.9 per 100,000. During this same period, asthma was a contributing cause in the deaths of an additional 16 to 29 Maine residents each year. Maine has consistently lower asthma death rates compared to the U.S. overall and similar rates compared to U.S. non-Hispanic whites.

For more information about asthma in Maine, call the Maine CDC Asthma Program at 207-287-3041 or visit their website at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mat/.