

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SUPPORTS ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

TALLAHASSEE—May is National Asthma Awareness Month and the Florida Department of Health is partnering with the Florida Asthma Coalition and the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation to keep children in school by promoting asthma management in public schools across the state. In the 2012–2013 school year, it is estimated that approximately 460,000 instructional hours were lost due to asthma in Florida.

“When students have their asthma under control they perform better academically and miss fewer days of school,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Keeping our children healthy and in school is key to ensuring a healthy future for Florida.”

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes repeated episodes or attacks of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and nighttime or early morning coughing. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, asthma currently affects one out of 12 (8.2 percent) adults and one out of nine (11.2 percent) public middle and high school students in Florida. There is no cure for asthma, but with proper management of the disease it is possible to reduce and prevent asthma episodes or attacks.

“Having asthma management programs in place is one of the keys to reducing the burden of this disease on Florida’s school-aged children,” said Rebecca Matthews, interim executive director of the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation. “Florida Healthy Kids is proud to award the schools that prioritize and implement these programs so that the examples they set can be applauded across the state.”

Asthma is one of the main reasons students miss school due to illness. Having asthma management programs in place is one of the keys to reducing the burden of this disease on Florida’s school-aged children. Through the Florida Asthma Program, the department supports the efforts of the Florida Asthma Coalition and the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation to reward schools that make asthma management a priority with the Asthma-Friendly School Recognition.

The Florida Asthma-Friendly School Recognition was developed to recognize public schools that meet criteria for excellence in asthma management. These are schools where administrators, staff, nurses, faculty, families and clinical partners are working together to

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help students with asthma properly manage their disease. Recognized schools enjoy a healthier student body and opportunities to show off their school's success

To learn more about the Asthma-Friendly School Recognition and to view the application visit <http://floridaasthmacoalition.com/schools>. The deadline for applications is May 15, 2015.

The Asthma Friendly School website is up-to-date with all application materials at <http://floridaasthmacoalition.com/schools>.

To learn more about the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, visit www.healthykids.org.

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