



# Community Health Brief

from Rady Children's Hospital San Diego

December 2025

## Background

Every year, about 3,000 children visit the Emergency Department (ED) at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego because of asthma. Many of these visits happen because asthma isn't being well managed at home. This can be due to missed medications, incorrect use of inhalers, exposure to triggers like dust or smoke, or trouble getting regular medical care. The Care Redesign department launched the Breathe Well (BW) Nurse Asthma Education Program. This program offers follow-up support after a child's ED visit to help caregivers understand asthma and connect them with their child's doctor.



## Program Description

After a child visits the ED for asthma, a specially trained nurse from the BW team calls the family within three days. During the call, the nurse:

- Teaches caregivers about asthma and how to manage it.
- Reviews medications and shows how to use them correctly.
- Helps identify things in the home or environment that might trigger asthma.
- Offers triage services if the child's symptoms persist.

Families are grouped into three levels based on their needs. Interventions may include education, assessment of needs, and scheduling follow-up appointments with primary care physicians (PCPs). Families dealing with frequent asthma attacks or other health and social challenges get extra support, including referrals to community services. Families are also invited to attend fun and educational events in their neighborhoods. These sessions include:

- Hands-on asthma education
- Free asthma-friendly cleaning kits
- Support from child life specialists
- One-on-one time with a BW nurse
- Help connecting with their child's regular doctor or specialist

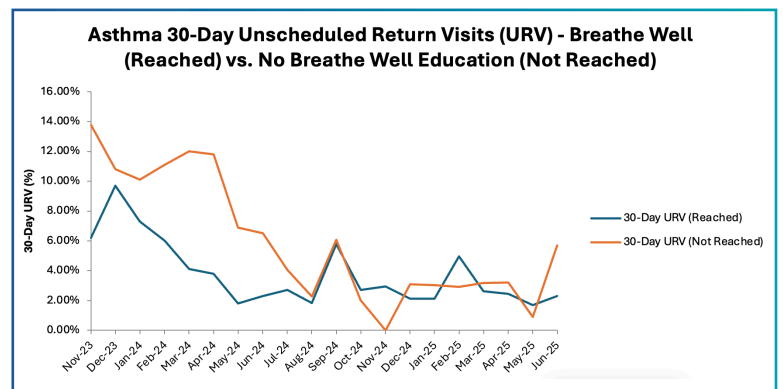


## Program Evaluation

From November 2023 to June 2025, nurses conducted outreach to nearly 3,000 families. All families with access to MyChart, the electronic health record, received written education. Almost half (48%) received personalized care and education. Most families (86%) were also screened for challenges like food insecurity, transportation issues, or housing problems—and those in need were connected to helpful resources. Families were also reconnected to their PCP for follow-up care.

## Positive Outcomes

Children whose families spoke with a BW nurse were less likely to return to the ED within 30 days compared to those who didn't receive follow-up education.



## Next Steps

The team is looking for more ways to support families earlier in their asthma journey, aiming to improve care and prevent emergencies before they happen.