



## Information on Asthma

*Asthma is a chronic disease that is associated with poor housing conditions. This disease is disproportionately prevalent among residents of public housing. Among the major contributors to asthma in public housing units are environmental factors “triggers”, such as indoor allergens caused by pest infestations.*

### Facts

- Asthma is one of the country’s most common diseases. In the United States 30.8 million people have been diagnosed with asthma. It is a common chronic childhood disorder, affecting an estimated 6.8 million children under the age of 18.
- Ethnic differences in asthma prevalence, morbidity, and mortality are highly correlated with poverty, urban air quality, indoor allergens, lack of patient education, and inadequate medical care.
- Asthma is slightly more prevalent in African Americans than Caucasians. African Americans are 3 times more likely to be hospitalized and die from asthma. African American women have the highest asthma mortality rate of all groups, more than 2.5 times higher than Caucasian women
- According to unpublished data from a random-digit-dial telephone survey of Boston residents, 20% of adult public housing residents reported being told by a doctor that they currently have asthma compared to 9% of other city residents.<sup>11</sup>
- Among public housing residents, 22% of women and 15% of men reported having asthma. Rates were higher among Blacks (26%) than Hispanics (16%) or Whites (13%).<sup>11</sup>
- Rates of asthma were also higher among those born in the US (21%) than outside the US (10%), and among those with less than a high school education (24%).<sup>11</sup>
- Residents who lived in public housing developments (20%) and those who received rental assistance (20%) were equally likely to have asthma. <sup>11</sup>
- Poor adults, particularly those living in public housing, have higher asthma rates as a result of environmental factors as well as problems managing the disease once it has been diagnosed.<sup>9</sup>
- About 1 in 8 adults in the Hope VI Panel study sample reported having had an asthma attack in the past year, about three times the number of asthma attacks reported by a national sample of adults.<sup>9</sup>
- The Hope VI sample found that 8% of the panel had visited the emergency room or an urgent care center for an asthma attack, while less than 1 percent nationally had done the same.<sup>9</sup>