

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
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**Emergency Medication Administration Law and Asthma Management Resources Help Students and Families**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Health care professionals, a school administrator, and a family met at Centennial Elementary School in Bismarck today to help raise awareness about the need for asthma education and the benefits of the state’s new law that allows students to self-administer medications for asthma and life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

Dr. Nicholas Neumann, a pulmonologist affiliated with several local clinics and the Regional Children’s Asthma Clinic, said, “It is critical that people who have chronic diseases, like asthma, actively participate in the management of their own medical problems. There really is no other way to achieve good control. In order to do this, patient and family education is essential, and this is available from your local physician, the departments of human services and health, and specialized centers like the Regional Children’s Asthma Clinic, which bring together multiple experts to help people understand the disease process, the various triggers and prevention, the ways to monitor control, the prescribed medications, and a specific plan of action to intervene before the problems get out of control. Urgent action can be a lifesaver.”

“The new law allowing properly trained students to possess and self-administer their asthma medications at school is a very important step in improving asthma control in our communities,” Neumann said. “It appropriately encourages the students to take responsibility for their own health and wellness, and it promotes a healthy partnership between the schools, the medical community, and young patients and their families.”

Kora Dockter, RN, North Dakota State Asthma Work Group Coordinator and program administrator at the North Dakota Department of Human Services – Children’s Special Health Services Unit, has been involved with state asthma education and treatment clinics. She also helped develop the new state law that enables students to carry and administer emergency medication.

She said, “The law adds consistency across the various school districts. I’m pleased that policymakers supported this.”

Dockter said that after the law was enacted, three state agencies – the departments of health, human services, and public instruction, partnered with many other organizations and individuals to develop Web-based training for health care professionals and educators. A Web site was created and features training video clips, a copy of the law, the asthma action plan, and the anaphylaxis action plan. Completed plans meet the education documentation requirements of the law. The site is [www.ndhealth.gov/asthma](http://www.ndhealth.gov/asthma).

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Centennial Elementary School principal Rollie Messmer participated in the training video. He said, “Asthma is a leading cause of school absences. Educators and coaches are concerned about the health of students. It benefits everyone if students know how to handle their asthma or severe allergies and if school personnel know if a child’s health condition may require emergency treatment.”

Laura Roberts is very aware of the benefits of asthma education. She brings her son to the free Regional Children’s Asthma Clinic. He is now able to carry his medicine, and she said he feels safer.

“The school has his asthma action plan,” Roberts said. “Clay has learned how to recognize when his asthma is acting up, and can use his inhaler if he needs it. This is such a relief.”

Free asthma education and treatment services are available through the Regional Children’s Asthma Clinic, held monthly at Mid Dakota Clinic. The clinic serves children age birth to 21 from Burleigh, Emmons, Grant, Kidder, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, and Sioux counties. The St. Alexius Foundation administers the clinic, and the N.D. Department of Human Services provides funding. For information call 701-530-8520.

According to North Dakota Department of Health data, between 8 percent and 10 percent of school-age children in North Dakota currently have asthma. This equates to about 11,000 children.

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