



Asthma Burden Facts

- Asthma is a serious chronic condition that affects thousands of children and adults in Montana.
- A little over one third (**37%**) of adults with asthma in Montana have experienced asthma symptoms in the past year.
- Taking asthma medication is an important part of controlling asthma. Almost one in seven (**14%**) adults are not able to fill their asthma medications due to cost.
- Montanans are also charged millions each year on asthma-related hospital and emergency department visits, which could be prevented with proper asthma control.

The Problem

Asthma is a common chronic condition that impacts the lungs. People with asthma experience wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing. Asthma can be properly controlled by eliminating triggers, visiting the doctor for regular asthma checkups, and taking medications as prescribed. In 2023, 12% of adults and 7% of children were reported as currently having asthma.

Figure. Over half of adults in Montana with asthma have uncontrolled asthma.

Percentage of adults in Montana with asthma who:

Did not have well controlled asthma.	54%
Do not know the symptoms of an asthma attack.	45%
Experienced an episode of asthma or an attack in the past year.	37%
Had some form of activity limited due to their asthma.	36%
Do not know how to respond to an asthma attack.	35%
Had an episode or an attack in the past three months.	32%
Missed at least one day of work in the last year due to their asthma.	24%
Have an asthma action plan for treatment decisions.	18%
Were not able to fill an asthma prescription due to cost.	14%

The Cost of Uncontrolled Asthma in 2024

The estimated total charges of asthma-related emergency department visits in Montana was just over \$3.9 million. With 1,563 total visits, the typical charge for a single visit was \$2,550. Asthma related hospitalizations in Montana had \$5.2 million in charges. With 259 reported asthma-related hospital stays, this meant the average charge was \$20,247. Furthermore, there were 21,041 asthma-related Medicaid claims for 7,942 distinct Medicaid recipients.

Table. Montanans were charged over \$9 million for asthma-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations in 2024.

	Emergency Department	Hospitalizations
Total Charges	\$3,984,987	\$5,243,860
Stays/visits	1,563	259
Average Charge	\$2,550	\$20,247

Contact

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Resources

For more information and resources, visit the Montana Asthma Program website at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/asthma/>



Program Activities

- The Montana Asthma Control Program (MACP) offers quality improvement assistance to health care facilities to promote and improve evidence-based care for Montanans with asthma.
- The MACP provides educational opportunities for healthcare providers. Hundreds of Montana healthcare providers have received continuing education through MACP's Big Sky Pulmonary Conference, asthma educator review courses, and webinars.
- The MACP is the primary source for asthma data in Montana. Surveillance reports are developed three times per year and provided to health care providers and asthma stakeholders around the state. Additional reports and evaluations are released throughout the year.
- The Montana Asthma Home Visiting Program (MAP) trains public health nurses and respiratory therapists to empower people with uncontrolled asthma and their families with the knowledge and tools they need to manage the disease. Nearly all participants have well-controlled asthma after completing the program and experience a decrease in ED visits, hospitalizations, and daily symptoms. There are 7 sites funded to provide this service across all counties, with a recent virtual option added.
- The MACP offers free trainings to school nurses, coaches, and childcare providers on how to help youth manage asthma in their respective environments. To date, a combination of more than 400 school staff, coaches, and childcare staff have completed on-line trainings for continuing education credits.
- The Montana Asthma Advisory Group (MAAG) currently has over 50 members representing 40+ organizations and agencies statewide. Organizations or individuals can join the MAAG by completing a registration form at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/asthma/advisorygroup>

Sources

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2. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS) Data. 2023
3. Montana Hospital Discharge Data System. Office of Epidemiology and Scientific Support, Public Health and Safety Division. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Data provided courtesy of participating MHA members. 2024
4. Montana Emergency Department Discharge Data. Office of Epidemiology and Scientific Support, Public Health and Safety Division. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. 2024
5. Montana's Program for Automating and Transforming Healthcare (MPATH). Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Medicaid Claims Data. 2024