



# School walkthrough program 2013-2014 one-year follow-up evaluation report

## Background

Uncontrolled asthma significantly affects student performance. Nationally 14 million school days are missed each year due to asthma exacerbations. In Wisconsin, asthma affects one in thirteen children, translating to about 100,000 children. Since children spend more than 1,000 hours a year in school, asthma management in schools is imperative to student health and success.

The Wisconsin Asthma Coalition's (WAC) school walkthrough program's goals are to increase school attendance by reducing exposure to environmental asthma triggers found within schools. The program is free of charge for all participating schools and primarily targets elementary schools with high rates of free and reduced lunch and also may include middle and high schools.

A walkthrough consists of the HealthCorps member, representing the WAC and a school representative going into each classroom to identify environmental asthma triggers. During this time the HealthCorps member is training the school representative so they may complete future walkthroughs independently. Each school receives a report upon completion of a walkthrough detailing the walkthrough's findings along with low to no-cost recommendations to reduce and/or remove identified environmental asthma triggers. From there schools are encouraged to share the report with key stakeholders and implement feasible changes to address environmental asthma triggers.

In 2013-2014, 29 schools (representing 12 school districts) participated in the school walkthrough program. Additional walkthroughs were completed through other entities (e.g., via WAC mini grants) and are not included in this report. Figure 1 shows the emergency department and hospitalization rates for the counties that participating schools were located in.

**Figure 1. Emergency department (ED) and hospitalization rate for counties represented.**

Counties represented	ED visit rate per 10,000 (95% CI) 2012-2014	ED visit rate county rank	Hospitalization rate per 10,000 (95% CI) 2012-2014	Hospitalization rate county rank
Milwaukee	76.5 (75.5-77.6)	2	20.8 (20.3-21.4)	1
Rock	55.1 (52.9-57.2)	4	11.0 (10.1-11.9)	5
Racine	44.2 (42.4-45.9)	9	11.3 (10.4-12.1)	4
Vilas	42.4 (36.5-48.3)	11	7.4 (5.4-9.9)	13
Shawano	41.1 (37.4-44.7)	14	4.7 (3.7-6.0)	44
Manitowoc	39.5 (36.8-42.2)	16	6.3 (5.3-7.3)	28
Wood	26.2 (24.0-28.5)	43	7.0 (6.0-8.1)	18
Bayfield	25.0 (20.1-30.8)	46	3.3 (1.8-5.3)	64
Portage	22.7 (20.7-24.8)	55	4.7 (3.8-5.7)	45
Fond du Lac	21.9 (20.2-23.6)	57	3.0 (2.4-3.7)	66
<b>Wisconsin overall</b>	<b>37.1 (36.8-37.4)</b>		<b>8.7 (8.5-8.8)</b>	

Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health. (2016). *Wisconsin Asthma Statistics*. Madison, WI. Retrieved from <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/asthma/facts.htm#stats>

## Evaluation data

A three-month and one-year follow-up survey was used to assess the program's impact and sustainability. All 29 schools (12 school districts) completed the three-month survey (n=29) and of those 29 schools, 21 schools (8 school districts) completed the one-year survey (n=21). Data from both surveys were analyzed to provide a comprehensive report.

### Figure 2. Environmental and policy changes schools have made to address environmental asthma triggers.

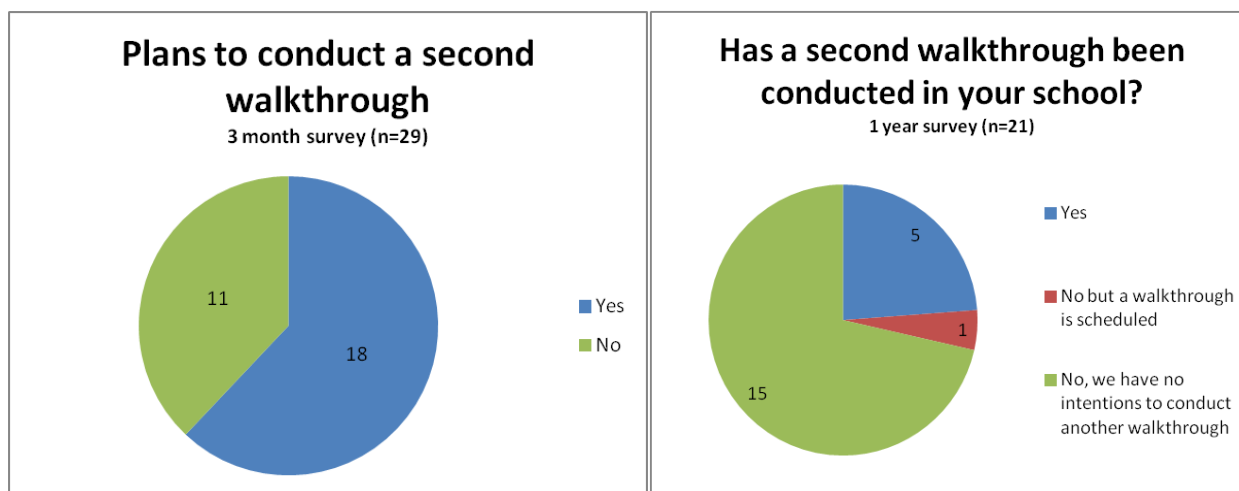
\*The total number of schools and school districts indicated for each recommended change shows the number of schools (n=29) that made changes in 2013-2014. The numbers are unduplicated in the data between three months and one-year survey data. For example, nine schools indicated they had removed or limited upholstered furniture in the three-month survey, and an additional seven schools indicated they removed or limited upholstered furniture in the one-year survey. In total sixteen schools had made changes to remove or limit upholstered furniture.

(\* indicates duplicated school responses from the three-month to one-year survey.)

Changes made based on the findings of the school walkthrough program	Number of schools		Total number
	Three months survey	One year survey	
Removed or limited upholstered furniture	9	7	16
Removed or regularly cleaned stuffed animals, blankets, and pillows	8	*	8
Vacuum carpet daily	7	1	8
Removed carpeting	5	*	5
Reduced clutter & disorganization	6	2	8
Limit plants and/or require watering trays	4	*	4
Limit use of air fresheners and fragrances	7	*	7
Use green cleaning products	2	2	4
Prohibit staff from smelling of tobacco smoke	0	1	1
Addressed or patched water leakage issues	1	5	6
Limit food prep and storage to lounges and cafeteria	4	1	5
Placed walk-off mats at all building entrances	2	*	2
Developed an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system	1	3	4

Implemented "no pet" policy	5	6	<b>11</b>
-----------------------------	---	---	-----------

**Figure 3. Three-month response to whether schools plan to conduct a second walkthrough compared to the one-year response as to how many schools conducted a second walkthrough.**



**Expansion of school walkthrough to other schools within the district**

When asked whether school districts planned to expand the school walkthrough program to other schools in their district in the three-month survey (n=12); seven school districts indicated that they had no plans to expand the program or that they were unsure. Out of those seven school districts one district completed school walkthroughs in all of their schools. Five school districts indicated that they planned to expand the program into other schools in their district (Figure 3).

When asked whether the school districts planned to expand the school walkthrough program to other schools in their district in the one-year survey (n=8); seven school districts indicated they had no plans to expand the program or that they were unsure. Out of those seven school districts, three school districts had reported in the three-month survey that they planned to expand the program into other schools in their district. One school district indicated that they planned to expand the program into other schools in their district. The school district that indicated this stayed consistent with their response from the three-month survey.

The WAC was interested in additional support needed to continue and/or expand the school walkthrough program and added a question to the one-year survey.

**Figure 4. Additional services and support from WAC**

What support can be provided by the Wisconsin Asthma Coalition to continue the school walkthrough program at your school and/or expand it to other schools in the district?	1 year (n=21)
More written materials	9
Reminders and follow ups	4
Provide more staff training	3
Nothing – we are not planning to do a walkthrough again	3
Nothing – we have everything we need	2
Financial support	1

\*The one-year survey requested data on school absenteeism to assess if the walkthrough had impacted absenteeism rates. However, survey respondents did not have access to this information; therefore there was insufficient data to report.

## **Conclusion**

The three-month and one-year post evaluations data indicates that the WAC school walkthrough program has made a positive impact on the 29 participating schools in 2013-2014. All but one of the participating schools have made at least one change to address environmental asthma triggers. Some key changes that schools have made to address asthma triggers include; sixteen schools have removed or limited upholstered furniture, eleven schools have implemented a "no pet policy," five schools have removed carpeting, and one school has prohibited staff from smelling of tobacco smoke. These environmental and policy changes is evidence that schools are striving to create healthier school environments for their students.

Many schools indicated plans to complete a second walkthrough in the three-month survey, but few had indicated completion of a second walkthrough in the one-year survey. Some common explanations as to why second walkthrough's were not being completed were: schools consistently adhering to changes to address asthma triggers, asthma not being a big issue in their schools, more feasible to conduct a walkthrough once every two years. Schools identified that more written materials, reminders and follow ups, and more staff training from the WAC would be helpful in the sustainability of the program.

## **Next Steps**

The WAC school walkthrough has made significant strides in partnering with Wisconsin schools to create healthier school environments, but continuous evaluation is required to identify opportunities to fully achieve the goal of reducing absenteeism.

The follow-up evaluation findings indicated that the school walkthrough program is successful in reducing environmental asthma triggers; however there is still room for improvement in regards to improving student attendance. School absenteeism is not a good metric to use because it is difficult to obtain the data.

Two new metrics have been selected for the current implementation year: the number times rescue medication is administered not related to controller medication and the number of times participating schools call 911 to manage an asthma exacerbation. While these metrics will not point to decrease absenteeism, they will indicate how well asthma is being managed.

Close to half of the survey respondents indicated a need for more written materials to continue implementation of the school walkthrough program on their own. To address this, the WAC is creating a school walkthrough guidebook focused on three easy steps for schools to complete their own walkthrough. Additionally, this program may be most successful with coordination between school champions and the WAC.