

trusted messengers

2020 – 2024 IMPACT REPORT

Overview

Trusted Messengers is Allergy & Asthma Network's multifaceted health equity initiative. It is designed to reduce healthcare inequity by helping people get the knowledge they need from trusted, credible sources to adopt healthy behaviors and make informed decisions about their health.

The Trusted Messengers initiative:

- Directly addresses disparities in asthma, allergies, eczema and related conditions.
- Meets under-resourced people where they are.
- Provides health-literate, culturally responsive educational materials in English and Spanish.
- Encourages trust in the healthcare system, self-management, self-advocacy, and shared decision-making.
- Creates opportunities for people living with asthma, allergies, eczema and related conditions to learn about engagement in research and participation in clinical trials.

Key elements:

- Community partnerships
- Outreach events in under-resourced communities
- Free virtual asthma coaching program to improve asthma outcomes.

Background

Black and Hispanic people living in the US are disproportionately impacted by the negative health and financial outcomes of asthma, allergies, food allergies and eczema. Inequities in socioeconomic status, health care access and environmental justice are all contributing factors to negative health outcomes.

Black and Hispanic people living in the US are more likely to struggle with financial access to health care. Lack of insurance coverage, which affects 11% of Black and 19% of Hispanic people, hinders filling prescriptions and seeking primary and specialty care. Given that asthma, allergies and atopic dermatitis require consistent medical management, many low-income and uninsured Black and Hispanic people experience worse health outcomes, including more frequent asthma attacks and skin infections related to atopic dermatitis. Black and Hispanic populations experience greater symptom severity, acute episodic hospitalizations, and death due to asthma, atopic dermatitis, and food allergies.

Trusted Messengers began in 2020 to address the negative health impact of COVID-19 and asthma in the Black community through partnerships with local churches, faith-based organizations, local and national groups, community health centers and doctors in under-resourced communities. This initiative has expanded beyond asthma education to offer medically accurate, health literate, culturally responsive awareness and education programs for people living with asthma, food allergies, eczema, atopic dermatitis, and chronic urticaria.

Trusted Messengers allows Allergy & Asthma Network to meet people in their own communities at local health fairs and other community outreach events. The Trusted Messengers signature program is the Virtual Asthma Coaching Program, delivered in both English and Spanish. Our program evaluation data shows that virtual asthma coaching can improve asthma control and self-management skills.

Results for 2023 – 2024

Revised the Trusted Messengers Strategic Framework

Vision	We aspire to be the best in our industry at partnering on efforts to address health inequities and increase access to important health information and screenings for those who are at greater risk for asthma, allergies and related conditions.
Mission	Launch a unique national project built on trust to address health inequities, increase access to important health information and screenings for people of color, and improve long-term health outcomes, especially for those with respiratory conditions.
Strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drive community engagement by empowering lifestyle changes and healthy behaviors through education.• Expand healthcare access: address barriers to care for at-risk patients with chronic illness.• Accelerate digital innovation: translate patient data insights into personalized solutions.
Action areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program: assessments for asthma, food allergy, and eczema at educational events with a 6-week virtual asthma intervention.• Platforms: community digital health hub (BREATHE asthma coaching platform); communications hub (<i>TrustedMessengers.org</i>); and partner digital channels.• Partners: leading national and local organizations with complementary technical expertise and resources.
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative • Authentic • Rapid • Scalable • Gold standard

2023 Trusted Messengers Community Events

Allergy & Asthma Network partners with community organizations to participate in events at churches, health fairs, and community centers. Our team shares educational resources about asthma, allergies, eczema and other related conditions and conducts asthma assessments.

Allergy & Asthma Network participated in 7 community outreach events in 2023:

- Ebenezer Baptist Church Health Fair - August 5, 2023, Atlanta, GA
- Black Health Matters Health Summit and Expo - August 17, 2023, New York, NY
- Harlem Week Festival - August 19, 2023, New York, NY
- Lower East Side Festival - August 27, 2023, New York, NY
- African American Male Wellness Agency Black Men's Wellness Day - September 16, 2023, Detroit, MI
- Black Health Matters Fall Summit and Expo - October 7, 2023, Los Angeles, CA

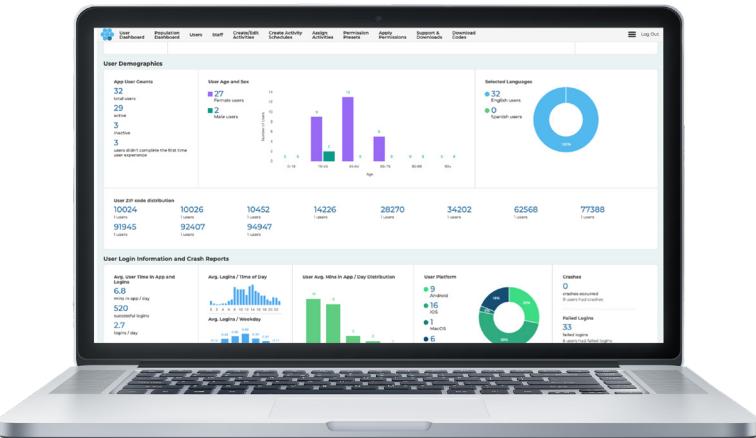


In total, we screened 220 people at community events in 2023; 112 people were identified as eligible for the virtual asthma coaching program, and 42 people chose to enroll.

Virtual Asthma Coaching Program

The Virtual Asthma Coaching Program is a novel approach designed to help adults with asthma better understand their condition and improve their asthma self-management skills. The program originally focused on Black/African American communities. In late 2022, Allergy & Asthma Network expanded the program to address the needs of Hispanic/Latino communities by offering the program in Spanish. The Virtual Asthma Coaching Program involves six weeks of one-on-one personalized coaching with a certified asthma educator. Participants use disease management tools on their smartphone, tablet, or computer.

In 2022, 217 adults enrolled in the Virtual Asthma Coaching Program. Participants reported better knowledge in managing their asthma, fewer asthma flares, and greater confidence in asking questions at their healthcare appointments.



In 2023, Allergy & Asthma Network conducted a quality assessment of the Virtual Asthma Coaching Program. It evaluated why some people did not complete the coaching program. The key reason cited was that the initial platform was not compatible with older model smartphones. As a result, Allergy & Asthma Network suspended the program until August while a new platform was secured and implemented to better address the technology issue.

In October, Allergy & Asthma Network began enrolling new participants into a new Virtual Asthma Coaching Program platform to improve the user experience and program adherence. Since then, 42 people have enrolled in the coaching program; through March 15, 2024, 25 people have completed the program. Preliminary analysis shows similar success in people learning asthma self-management skills and improving their asthma control. No enrollees

have dropped out due to difficulty accessing and using the new platform. In addition, the new platform offers dashboards for the asthma coaches to better track progress for enrollees.

New Trusted Messengers Program Educational Resources

Educational Materials

We also created a new Virtual Asthma Coaching Program Participant Workbook in 2023 to reinforce learnings covered in the 6-week asthma coaching program.

We created one-page handouts in both English and Spanish to be distributed at Trusted Messengers outreach events. The handouts are also available as free downloads in the Allergy & Asthma Network online store. Each handout is written at a grade 6 or below reading level to ensure health literacy. The topics include:

- What is asthma?
- Asthma control
- Asthma symptoms and triggers
- Asthma and pregnancy
- What are food allergies?
- What is eczema?
- What is chronic urticaria?
- Vaccines
- Research and clinical trials



Publications, Abstracts, Articles

Publication in 2023

Stempel D, Nemal SK, Lynch B, Gardner DD, Winders T. (2023) Application of passive monitoring of nighttime respiratory symptoms in chronic asthma management. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaip.2022.12.050>

Abstracts /Poster Presentations in 2023

Trusted Messengers: Virtual Asthma Coaching. Presented at Health Equity Advocacy Heroes Conference. Washington, DC. February 2024.

Objective Assessment of Nighttime Cough in Uncontrolled Asthma Does Not Correlate with Patient Self-Reported Symptoms. Presented at AAAAI in San Antonio, Texas. February 2023

Nighttime Cough Frequency in Patients with Severe Asthma. Presented at ATS 2023 in Washington, DC. May 2023.

Trusted Messenger Virtual Asthma Coaching Intervention Impacts Asthma Self-Management. Presented at ATS 2023 in Washington, DC. May 2023.

Press Releases

- Virtual Asthma Coaching Found to Improve Asthma Control
- Blue Marble Health and Allergy & Asthma Network Announce SBIR Award to Pilot Innovative BREATHE Virtual Asthma Coaching Platform

Status of 2023 Goals and Quality Improvement Initiatives

Goal or Obstacle Identified in 2023	Status
Invest in a user-friendly asthma coaching platform.	We identified, customized and launched a new platform to improve ease of use by participants and to address technology barriers affecting the retention rate of enrollees in the coaching platform.
Engage in 5 outreach events that are health focused.	We participated in 7 events that were health focused.
Be more strategic in identifying cities for health events.	All events were in cities experiencing high asthma burden.
Develop intentional networks and partnerships.	We formalized partnerships with Black Health Matters and the African American Male Wellness Agency.
Develop a formal education program in English and Spanish to reinforce best practices in asthma education.	We created and implemented a revised curriculum. We created supplemental print workbook for each coaching participant.
Invest in bilingual asthma educators to support Spanish-speaking participants.	Two bilingual asthma educators are now available for Spanish-speaking participants at events or for asthma coaching.
Address cumbersome incentive process for participants.	We identified and launched a new electronic platform that allows for the asthma coaches to easily issue electronic gift cards to participants using an iPad. The new platform also allows for tracking and reporting.
Improve upon the time it takes to enroll and consent participants in the coaching program.	We are now able to consent and enroll participants easily through the new coaching platform.
Establish advisory councils to support the program.	We hired a Chief Health Equity Officer in early 2024 to lead the strategy, partnerships and outreach program for Trusted Messengers.

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Goal or Obstacle Identified in 2023	Status
Host webinars for people in the Black and Hispanic/Latino communities about asthma, allergies and related conditions.	"Black People Like Me" and "Unidos Hablemos" are underway in 2024. They will address eczema, food allergy, COPD and asthma.
Conduct a multi-channel campaign to address disparities in asthma.	<p>Communications and program work related to health disparities continued throughout 2023 in all mission areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New content on the AAN website about health disparities; • Launch of a new Spanish language website, redalergiayasma.org; • Launch of a new Asthma Equity Explorer research database that highlights asthma disparities, asthmaequity.org.



Cumulative Results for 2020-2024

33
outreach events
as of March 2024

4,130
people reached as
of March 15, 2024

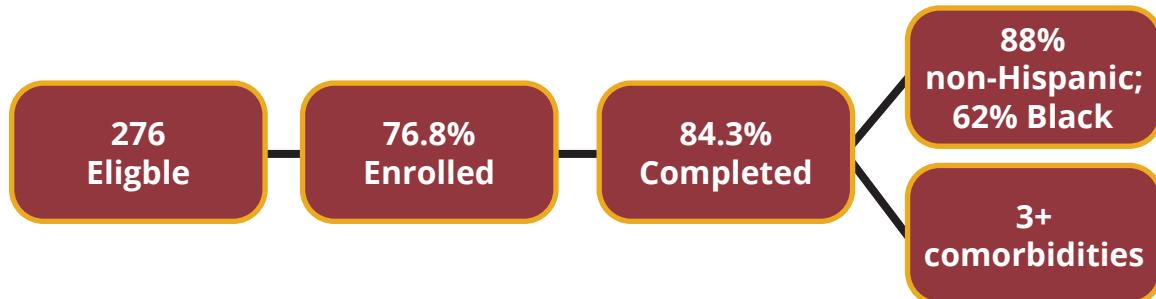
325
participants
enrolled

261
participants completed
the Virtual Asthma
Coaching Program

* As of March 26, 2024

2020-2023: 6 Week Program Impact Snapshot

PARTICIPATION/DEMOGRAPHICS



Symptom and Disease Management

Asthma
Symptoms
1.53
Days

Sleep
Disruption
1.08
Days

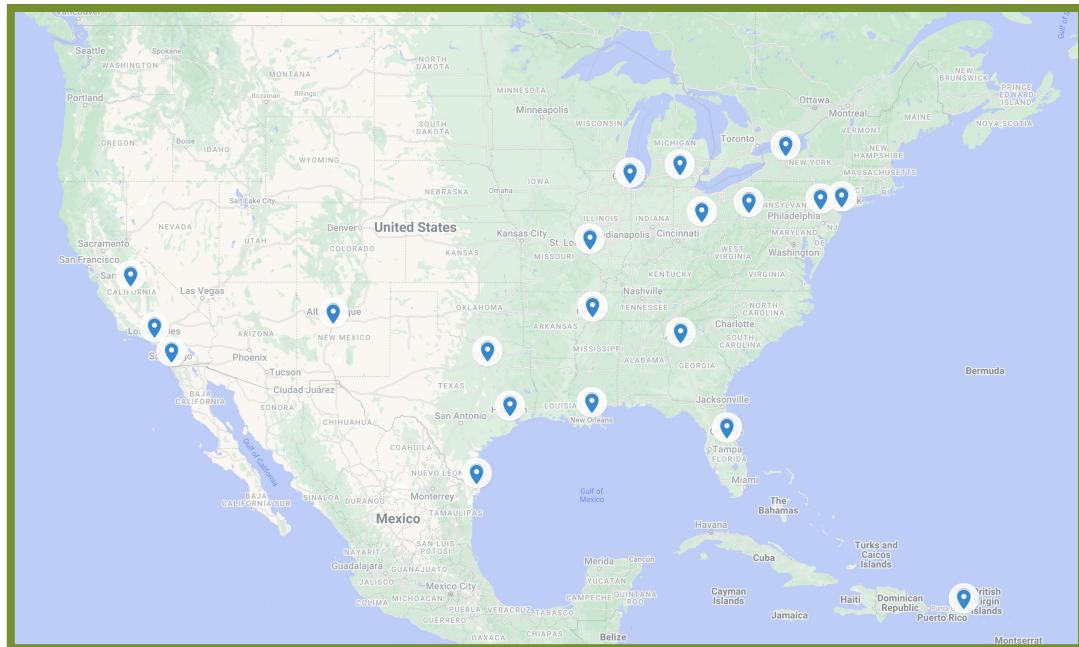
Shortness
of Breath
0.51
Days

Corticosteroid
Use
1.38
Bursts

2024 Goals

Community Outreach and Engagement Events

- Disseminated educational information about asthma, allergies and related conditions at 20 events in local communities.
- Formalize partnerships with organizations that conduct health outreach and services for the Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. Potential event partners include:
 - African American Male Wellness Agency
 - Balm in Gilead
 - Black Health Matters
 - Latino Connection
 - National Alliance for Hispanic Health
- Focus on events in cities based on those with a high asthma prevalence and where there are large Black/African American and/or Hispanic/Latino communities. Potential locations include:
 - Albany, NY
 - Atlanta, GA
 - Bethlehem, PA
 - Brownsville, TX
 - Chicago, IL
 - Columbus, OH
 - Dallas, TX
 - Fresno, CA
 - Houston, TX
 - Jackson, MI
 - Los Angeles, CA
 - Los Lunas, NM
 - Memphis, TN
 - New Orleans, LA
 - New York, NY
 - Orlando, FL
 - Pittsburgh, PA
 - Rochester, NY
 - San Diego, CA
 - San Juan, PR
 - St. Louis, MO



Virtual Asthma Coaching Program

Achieve cumulative enrollment of 500 people living with asthma into the Virtual Asthma Coaching program by the end of 2024.

Trusted Messengers Partnerships and Councils

The Network will bring together key stakeholders with Trusted Messengers Advisory Councils. Each participant will share lessons learned and best practices for ways to advance health equity in asthma, allergies and related conditions.

We are actively inviting advocates and partners to participate in three councils:

- Industry Advisory Council
- Patient and Caregiver Advisory Council
- Partner Organization Council

Expanding Trusted Messengers

Allergy & Asthma Network has expanded the scope of Trusted Messengers as an organization-wide initiative that encompasses all our health equity work. We advocate for under-resourced communities through our mission areas of outreach, education, advocacy and research. All Network health equity programs address social determinants of health and other systemic barriers to care.

trusted messengers Health Equity

Outreach

- Trusted Messengers events and partnerships
- Spanish language website, print and digital resources
- Partnerships with Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino community groups to disseminate educational resources

Education

- Implementation of CDC EXHALE strategies
- Specific projects to identify unmet needs for the Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino community
- Webinars for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino community
- TMP virtual asthma coaching
- *EczemaInSkinOfColor.org* + podcasts

Advocacy Policy Priorities

- Access to care and treatment
- Environment hazards & clean air
- Federal program funding
- Reduce environmental hazards and improve clean air
- Improve health equity

Research

- Diversity clinical trials
- PCORI work
- Projects to understand how to engage people of color in research
- Asthma Equity Explorer database

We are exploring the possibility of expanding the Virtual Asthma Coaching Program to offer coaching for eczema and food allergy.

Status Towards Achieving 2024 Goals

- A new Chief Health Equity Officer joined the AAN team in January 2024 to provide dedicated leadership to Trusted Messengers community outreach initiatives.
- We participated in two events in March in Atlanta, GA and two events in April, one in Washington, DC and one in Bethlehem, PA.
- The new one-page handouts are complete and are being disseminated at outreach events.
- We are actively engaged in discussions with community organizations to establish new partnerships.

Looking to the Future

Trusted Messengers has demonstrated positive impact since its inception in 2020. The program continues to mature and evolve to meet the needs of those in under-resourced communities.

In 2023, we focused on making quality improvements to the program and building the infrastructure to support greater impact in 2024 and beyond. The new virtual asthma coaching program, new workbook and new educational resources are already working well to strengthen the program.

We have a new Chief Health Equity Officer on board to lead the Trusted Messengers initiatives. We are actively recruiting for a Director of Hispanic Programs to further build effective outreach and educational resources for the Hispanic community.

We are grateful to our Trusted Messengers program sponsors for their continuing support of these initiatives. Their continued support of our Trusted Messengers health equity initiatives allows us to educate and empower people who are at greatest risk for poor health outcomes.

Awards



Founding Partner



Sponsors

