



# MAAG Meeting Minutes

## Thursday, January 19, 2023

### MACP Updates/Surveillance & Evaluation

#### 2022 in Review

- Wildfire Smoke Response
  - New updated Today's Air website, <http://todaysair.mtdeq.us/>, that uses GIS platform (a geographic information system (GIS) is a system that creates, manages, analyzes, and maps all types of data). All resources and links that were on the page before are still on the site. The new site includes adjustable graphs that show air quality health effect trends and particulate matter concentration trends over time.
  - Outdoor activity and air quality guidelines switched from using NowCast concentration numbers to Air Quality Index (AQI). The numbers you see on the guidelines and the today's air website should now match what most weather apps use.
  - The MACP continued to help develop various resources for the general public and different stakeholder groups- *Wood Heat & Indoor Air Quality, Wood Stoves & Air Pollution, Wildfire Smoke & Employee Health*. These and other resources can be found on [dphhs.mt.gov/airquality](http://dphhs.mt.gov/airquality).
- Asthma Educational Materials
  - Educational materials are available free of charge.
    - 21 partners ordered material including 7 asthma home visiting programs and 3 schools. Some partners placed multiple orders over the course of the year as there is no limit to the number of times you can order material. [Order here!](#)
- Asthma related continuing education
  - 47 attendees for the virtual Asthma Educator Review Course. The AE-C exam/certification are now managed by the [National Board for Respiratory Care](#). In 2022, Montana added 8 new Certified Asthma Educators (AE-C).
  - 110 attendees for the 2022 virtual Big Sky Pulmonary Conference with a 96% overall satisfaction rate.
  - MACP coordinated a training on the ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standards for Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) at the Department of Labor and Industries Safety Fest in Billings. Safety Fest is a collaborative effort between the Montana Department of Labor & Industry and businesses/entities across the state who donate their time to present various topics. This collaboration allows [SafetyFestMT](#) to provide FREE quality training to employers and their workers throughout Montana.
- Asthma in Schools
  - School Health Mini-Grants: 7 grants with an asthma focus during the 2022-2023 school year thus far.
    - Clancy and Wibaux- Student Asthma Self-Management Education
    - Monforton/Twin Bridges/- Staff Asthma Education
    - Nashua/Anaconda/Great Falls- Big Sky Pulmonary Conference scholarships

- We encourage all of our MAAG partners to speak with the school nurses or administrators in your community schools about applying for a \$1,000 [School Health Mini-Grant](#). The application process is very simple and there is minimal reporting required. AE-Cs and public health nurses from the community are also eligible to apply.
    - School Staff Trainings: 119 school staff were trained via the Creating Asthma Friendly Schools training on the OPI Teacher Learning Hub.
    - Covid-19 Relief Funding
      - ELC School Reopening Grants still available for schools \$50-\$100K depending on school district size.
        - Schools can use funding to support IAQ and HVAC system inspections.
        - Guidance has shifted heavily encouraging schools to use funding for other mitigation and prevention strategies including the purchase of portable air cleaners & HVAC system inspections/assessments
- MAP Update
  - Substantial increase in program enrollment in 2022. 68 clients enrolled up from 25 clients in 2021. 116 referrals to the MAP in 2022. MAP posters sent to over 1,400 providers. Digital media campaign focused on increasing awareness in rural counties newly opened to virtual home visiting in 2022.
  - Goals for 2023
    - Exploring options for bringing in-person home visiting to Yellowstone County and trying to find a new partner to implement the program in Missoula and surrounding counties.
    - 100+ newly enrolled clients
    - Continue targeted communication in underserved counties
- Asthma Quality Improvement
  - MACP worked with 7 clinics in Montana in 2022
  - QI sites are encouraged to establish a process for referring patients to the MAP.
  - In addition to improving workflow and patient outcomes, QI projects can increase clinic revenue.
  - Becoming a Certified Asthma Educator Review Course (1/2 day) is tentatively scheduled for May 18<sup>th</sup>. More information will be sent when available.
  - Clinics can access and submit a QI application on the MACP website, <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/asthma/qualityimprovement>
- Asthma Podcast
  - Podcast with Rachel Anderson will be released in May. The podcast will feature Rachel sharing her daughter's story with asthma. [www.talkinghealthinthe406.mt.gov](http://www.talkinghealthinthe406.mt.gov)
- Evaluation & Surveillance: See slides and recording for details
  - Adults in the MAP Evaluation nearly ready to publish (results included in slides)
  - Evaluations planned for 2023
    - Community Health Linkages
    - ASME Reimbursement

## 2023 Events

- 2023 Big Sky Pulmonary Conference  
March 2-4, 2023  
Fairmont Hot Springs Resort and Virtual  
<https://www.umt.edu/ces/conferences/bigskypulmonary/>

- Association of Asthma Educators National Conference- August 3,4,5 in Big Sky Montana!  
<https://asthmaeducators.org/conferences/>
- Climate & Health in the 406 Conference  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/climate-and-health-in-the-406-conference-registration-476813460897>



## Strategic Plan Focuses in 2023

- SDoH  
MACP looks for opportunities to address Social Determinants of Health throughout all of our interventions. We incorporate SDOH throughout our Strategic Asthma Plan, in our Guiding Principles and Cross Cutting Themes, as well as throughout our various goals and strategies.

In 2023 the MACP is hoping to work with partners like No Kid Hungry to ensure that all individuals with asthma who are touched by MACP interventions receive referrals to organizations that can help address food insecurity (whether that be patients from our QI clinics, students receiving ASME in schools, or families participating in the MAP).

QI sites will be encouraged to use SDOH screeners and connect patients with community resources when available. Use of the CONNECT bi-directional referral system will be encouraged where CONNECT is available. MAP sites are also required to administer the SDOH screener to all clients and refer them to community services, as necessary. Another way the MACP addresses transportation barriers or lack of access to care, is by continuing to offer the MAP virtually in counties where long-distance travel and access to care are issues. We also do this through supporting programs like IPHARM and Community Integrate Health.

To the extent possible we hope to establish connections with tribal partners who can help us identify ways in which our programs can address social determinants of health on Montana reservations. To that end, will continue to work with our DPHHS Tribal Health liaison to seek out these partnerships.

With the next five year cooperative agreement from the CDC and the National Asthma Control Program on the horizon, the MACP has an opportunity to create a new workplan and adopt new interventions. A very important focus of this next cooperative agreement will likely be equity and reducing social determinants of health.

- Reimbursement for Asthma Home Visiting Services

One area in our strategic plan that continues to run into road blocks is the objective of securing reimbursement for asthma home visiting services.

The MACP has presented the business case to Medicaid multiple times over the last several years, but we haven't been successful in securing reimbursement. Until some barriers are removed, it's unlikely asthma home visiting services will secure Medicaid reimbursement, but we will be persistent and seek opportunities to present our case.

Near the end of 2022, the MACP created a business case document and presentation slides to share with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana. Our program, with the Diabetes and Arthritis Programs here at DPHHS plan to approach BCBS collectively to discuss the possibility of reimbursing patient education programs or at the very least including them as part of their wellness incentive programs for different employers. Due to the legislative session, these talks with Blue Cross Blue Shield will likely have to wait until April or May.

- Supporting Culturally appropriate interventions tailored to American Indians living in Montana  
With help of our DPHHS American Indian Health Director we hope to meet with key tribal partners in 2023 to forge valuable partnerships and discuss partnership opportunities.
- Patient Provider Education  
The MACP will be working with the Montana AHEC to officially adopt and promote an online self-paced CHW Asthma training, which can empower CHWs to become important members of their local care teams. It's projected that this training will go live this summer of 2023. As the CHW profession and network continues to grow in Montana, it's important for us to provide resources and guidance on asthma care and management. The MACP will also continue to offer the AE-C Review Course, the Big Sky Pulmonary conference, and multiple free webinars with CE included.

Jason Kleinschmidt- There are major issues getting CMS reimbursement for ASME provided by a respiratory therapist. Is there anything currently happening to support reimbursement for ASME provided by an RT?  
There isn't anything currently, but there are efforts to support ASEM reimbursement provided by pharmacists.  
↳ It may be worth trying to bring Pharmacist and Respiratory Therapy advocacy organizations together to approach CMS with a proposal.

- Environment and Public Policy  
The MACP will continue to work with our partners at MT DEQ to develop information for the public on how they can protect themselves from outdoor ambient air pollution, including wildfire smoke.  
  
It has been a struggle trying to work with the state Low Income Energy Assistance and Weatherization Assistance Programs, but we will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate. School indoor air quality remains an important focus and we will continue to draw attention to the importance of IAQ on health and learning. Example policies and practices can be shared with schools, and we will encourage schools to utilize COVID-19 relief funding and other funding streams to improve indoor air quality. Working with the Montana High School Association to ensure athletic directors, coaches, and school administrators have the information they need to make informed decisions to protect the health of their students during wildfire smoke events will also remain a priority.  
  
Another area we can try to improve is educating business and community leaders on practices to improve IAQ. The MACP is exploring creating a Clean Indoor Air recognition program that businesses could use as a marketing tool to draw people into their business and show that they support community health and wellness. This type of program could also help community members identify places they can go to find clean air when conditions are poor in their area.

***The MACP will be send a short survey to MAAG members in February requesting additional input about how the MACP may be able to meet the goals in the state strategic asthma plan.***

## **Asthma QI in Fort Peck School Based Health Centers**

- Implemented telemedicine in school based health centers during the pandemic. Asthma was identified as a focus area where students could benefit from care plans.
- Asthma Support & QI Efforts
  - Review charting:
    - Are follow-up visits scheduled for asthma patients? Have asthma patients been seen recently for well visits? What are the barriers and how can we help them get visits scheduled?
  - Telemedicine network (15 providers from around MT)
    - Using sports physicals to identify patients with asthma or patients with risk factors for asthma exacerbations.
      - Phone call questionnaires with families to identify potential issues in the home

- Connect families to home environmental improvement resources
- Create Asthma Action Plans for students
- Spirometry in SBHC and referrals to outside providers if needed
- Spacers provided for children with asthma and the SBHC provides education on why it's important to carry spacer.
- Contracting with media company from Fort Peck Reservation to make educational videos with local students about how asthma impacts them and how manage their asthma.
- Question: Is education provided to school staff?
  - Yes, it's one of our goals to make sure that school staff feel comfortable reading an asthma action plan and responding to an asthma emergency.

## Air Purifiers in Schools Program

DPHHS is partnering with Medify Air and Grainger Inc. to offer **free HEPA air purifiers to Montana K-12 schools** through June 2023. Medify Air is a top-rated air purifier manufacturer that provides high quality HEPA air purifier systems and replacement filters. Grainger is a government contractor that has an established partnership with DPHHS to offer a variety of services. DPHHS is utilizing ARPA ELC School Reopening federal funds to support this partnership with the focus of improving indoor air quality in schools. In addition to reducing the transmission risk of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, these HEPA air purifier systems will provide an added benefit of helping schools maintain clean air during wildfire smoke events.

Please see the recording for addition details. More information about the program can also be found at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/ARPA/SchoolHealth/AirPurifiers>.

## Partner Sharing

Lori Byron: Has anyone worked with schools or school districts on no Idling Zones outside of schools?

- BJ: DPHHS made "No Idling Zone" signage available in past years through federal funding, but that funding is no longer available. Unfortunately there aren't any assessments that collect which schools are currently implementing this as a policy.
  - \*The MACP may be interested in bringing these signs back in future workplans. The MACP will talk to partners at DEQ about No Idling Zones and if there are any resources that could be dedicated.

## University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy- Propeller Health Project

Propellor is an FDA approved Bluetooth sensor which can connect to a variety of inhaler types and connect to a patient friendly smartphone app. UM IPHARM staff are looking to sign up eligible patients (asthma or COPD dx with eligible inhalers\*) and send the patient the sensor(s) and app login information. Each patient can have one rescue sensor and one maintenance sensor. IPHARM staff can view adherence and ACT scores on the provider portal and will check in with patients on a quarterly basis unless the portal identifies the patient needs a call sooner. We are currently looking for asthma patients who would like to participate.

**Please contact Rachael Zins with questions or to refer patients.**

Rachael Zins, Pharm D, AE-C  
 University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy  
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## American Lung Association

- Indigenous Communities Toolkit Webinar- <https://app.webinar.net/qMybjebOLdp>
- Working with Rural & Tribal schools to bring asthma/tobacco programs to the schools.
  - Open Airways for Schools
  - In-Depth: Alternative to Suspension Program

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Organization
BJ Biskupiak	MT Asthma Control Program- Program Manager
Jessie Fernandes	DPHHS Health Improvement Section- Section Supervisor
Jennifer Van Syckle	MT Asthma Control Program- QI Specialist/Communications Expert
Carolyn Linden	MT Asthma Control Program- Administrative Specialist
Ann Lanes	MT Asthma Control Program- Informatics Specialist/Web Administrator
Lori Byron	Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate- Co-Chair
Jennifer VandeKop	Anaconda Deer Lodge Health Department- MAP Home Visitor
Kris Minard	MT Office of Public Instruction- Tobacco Use Prevention Education Program Specialist
Christian Curtis	Fort Peck School Based Health Centers- Registered Nurse
Will Gardner	DPHHS Health Improvement Section- Lead Epidemiologist
Sara Howser-Burke	DPHHS- State School Nurse Consultant
Nora Drummond	Retired RT- Community Member
Rebecca Schuster	Flathead City-County Health Department- MAP Home Visitor
Kate Sexton	Lewis & Clark County Health Department- MAP Home Visitor
Jason Kleinschmidt	St. Vincent Healthcare- Respiratory Therapy Neurodiagnostics Manager
Pam Melton	St. Peter’s Health- Pharmacist
Breanne Josephson	Richland County Health Department- MAP Home Visitor
Kelly Keenan	Gallatin County Health Department- Director of Prevention Services (MAP Supervisor)
Rachel Anderson	Dietician at Premise Health / Community Member
Rachael Zins	University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy
Stephanie Iron	DPHHS American Indian Health Director
Mary Sparks	Lewis & Clark County Health Department- MAP Supervisor
Kyndra Hall	Bullhook Community Health Center- MAP Supervisor
Megan Brunelle	Cascade City-County Health Department- MAP Home Visitor
LeAnn Harrison	oneHealth (Custer County Health Department)- MAP Home Visitor
Mary Milin	DPHHS Disability and Health Program- Disability and Health Advisory
Liz Hall	American Lung Association- Health Promotions Manager
Jack Austin	Medify Air- Vice President of Sales
Jade Botic	University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy