



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate Siegrist, Nursing Supervisor, Public Health Home Visiting Program, Missoula City-County Health Department, 301 W. Alder, Missoula. 406-258-4298. ksiegrist@co.missoula.mt.us.

**Missoula City-County Health Department Launches New
MONTANA ASTHMA PROJECT (MAP) HOME VISITING PROGRAM**

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Missoula City-County Health Department (MCCHD) received a state-funded grant, through the Montana Asthma Control Program, to participate as one of three Montana pilot sites for the new Montana Asthma Project (MAP) Home Visiting Program. This grant was awarded to MCCHD's Health Services Division, Public Health Home Visiting Program, and will serve families in Missoula and Granite Counties.

Current data demonstrates that home visits are an integral part of improving asthma management. One randomized, controlled trial, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2004, engaged over 900 children in urban environments. The program included at-home asthma education and assistance in reducing environmental asthma triggers in the home. Over the course of one year, those who participated in the home visiting program had a decreased number of unscheduled emergency department visits, fewer missed school days, reduced wheezing, and fewer nights waking up experiencing asthma symptoms. In Montana a pilot program such as MAP is essential, identifying whether or not home-visiting asthma programs in rural areas have similar positive outcomes.

Affecting approximately 1 in 10 children within Missoula County, asthma is the most common chronic condition among children and one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. MAP allows MCCHD to focus on children and their families experiencing the physical, emotional, and financial

burdens that asthma may cause; giving them the knowledge and confidence to take control of their condition and lead active, healthy lives.

A specially trained Public Health Nurse will provide six visits over the course of a year with the goals of: improving asthma control and asthma-related quality of life, increasing knowledge of how to manage asthma symptoms including prescribed medication management, and completing a home environmental assessment to increase awareness of how to reduce and/or eliminate identified asthma triggers.

“The Montana Asthma Home Visiting Program is designed to provide children with asthma and their families support for disease management through a series of home visits that incorporate education and care coordination,” Katie Loveland, Montana Asthma Control Program Manager explains. “The program also provides families with supplies like bed covers and air filters to reduce asthma triggers in the home environment. We believe that children with asthma can control their disease, and this program will supplement traditional asthma care in a physician’s office with the expressed purpose of making the goal of well controlled asthma a reality.”

Kate Siegrist, Nursing Supervisor for the Public Health Home Visiting Program at MCCHD expressed her appreciation for the funding support, “We are grateful for this opportunity to help empower families living with asthma to reach and maintain their highest level of health.”

Providing services through the MAP home visiting program, MCCHD continues to reinforce its mission to “Promote and support optimal health for the people in our community.”

To learn more about the Montana Asthma Control Program please visit <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/asthma/chronic-disease-asthma-index.shtml> on the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPPHS) website.

MCCHD website: www.missoulapublichealth.org

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