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News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kenosha County Public Health offers asthma program, tips for withstanding poor air quality

With an Air Quality Advisory in effect for all of Wisconsin due to smoke originating from Canadian wildfires, Kenosha County Public Health is reminding residents of an ongoing program that offers free asthma management solutions to eligible residents.

The Asthma-Safe Homes Program provides free self-management education and home environmental walkthroughs to Medicaid-eligible children ages 2-18 years and pregnant women with poorly controlled asthma.

“This program is a valuable resource that we’re fortunate to be able to offer to families that are struggling with asthma,” said Lori Plahmer, the county’s interim health officer. “With the poor air conditions that we’ve been experiencing recently, we’d like to make sure the community is aware of this opportunity.”

Funded through a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the locally administered program is open to residents of Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties.

Participants are given up to \$1,000 worth of asthma-friendly cleaning supplies and other household goods upon completion of the program. This includes an asthma-friendly cleaning kit, a new vacuum cleaner and an air purifier.

The program includes two consultation sessions with a home walkthrough to identify environmental factors that might affect asthma, two follow-up calls, and self-management education by a trained asthma educator.

Plahmer said the goal is to reduce missed school or workdays, urgent care and emergency department visits, and hospitalizations due to asthma.

For more information about the program, visit www.breatheeasykenosha.com, call Asthma Program Coordinator Tessa Kohler at 262-909-3917, or send an email to Asthma@kenoshacounty.org.

Tips to protect yourself from unhealthy air:

- Check daily air pollution forecasts. Sources include local radio and TV weather reports, newspapers and online at <https://airnow.gov>.
- Avoid exercising outdoors when pollution levels are high. When the air is bad, walk indoors in a shopping mall or gym or use an exercise machine. Limit the amount of time your child spends playing outdoors if the air quality is unhealthy.
- Always avoid exercising near high-traffic areas. Even when air quality forecasts are good, the vehicles on busy highways can create high pollution levels up to one-third of a mile away.
- Don't burn wood or trash. Burning firewood and trash are among the major sources of particle pollution (soot) in many parts of the country.
- Use hand-powered or electric lawn care equipment rather than gasoline-powered. Old two-stroke engines like lawnmowers and leaf or snow blowers often have no pollution control devices. They can pollute the air even more than cars, though engines sold since 2011 are cleaner.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke indoors and support measures to make public places tobacco-free.

Information from the American Lung Association.

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