

Health Equity Advancement and Leadership (HEAL)

Reduce asthma deaths and illness among high-risk populations through a national program with community-driven actions

Why It Matters

The HEAL program launched in May 2022 to address findings from the Asthma Disparities in America report and reduce asthma deaths and illness among high-risk populations.

Extensive research and public health data identified disparities in asthma prevalence, mortality and health care utilization along racial and ethnic lines.

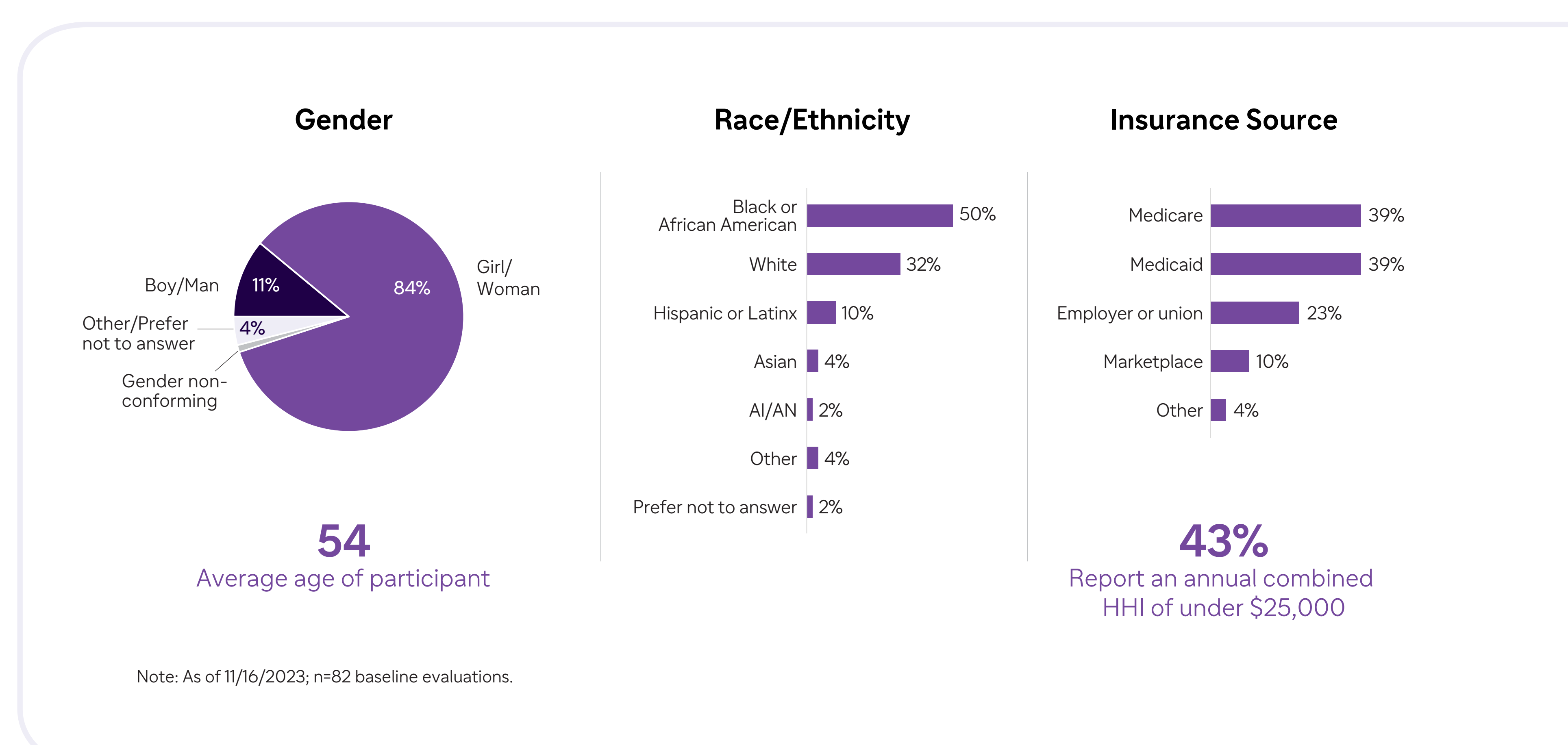
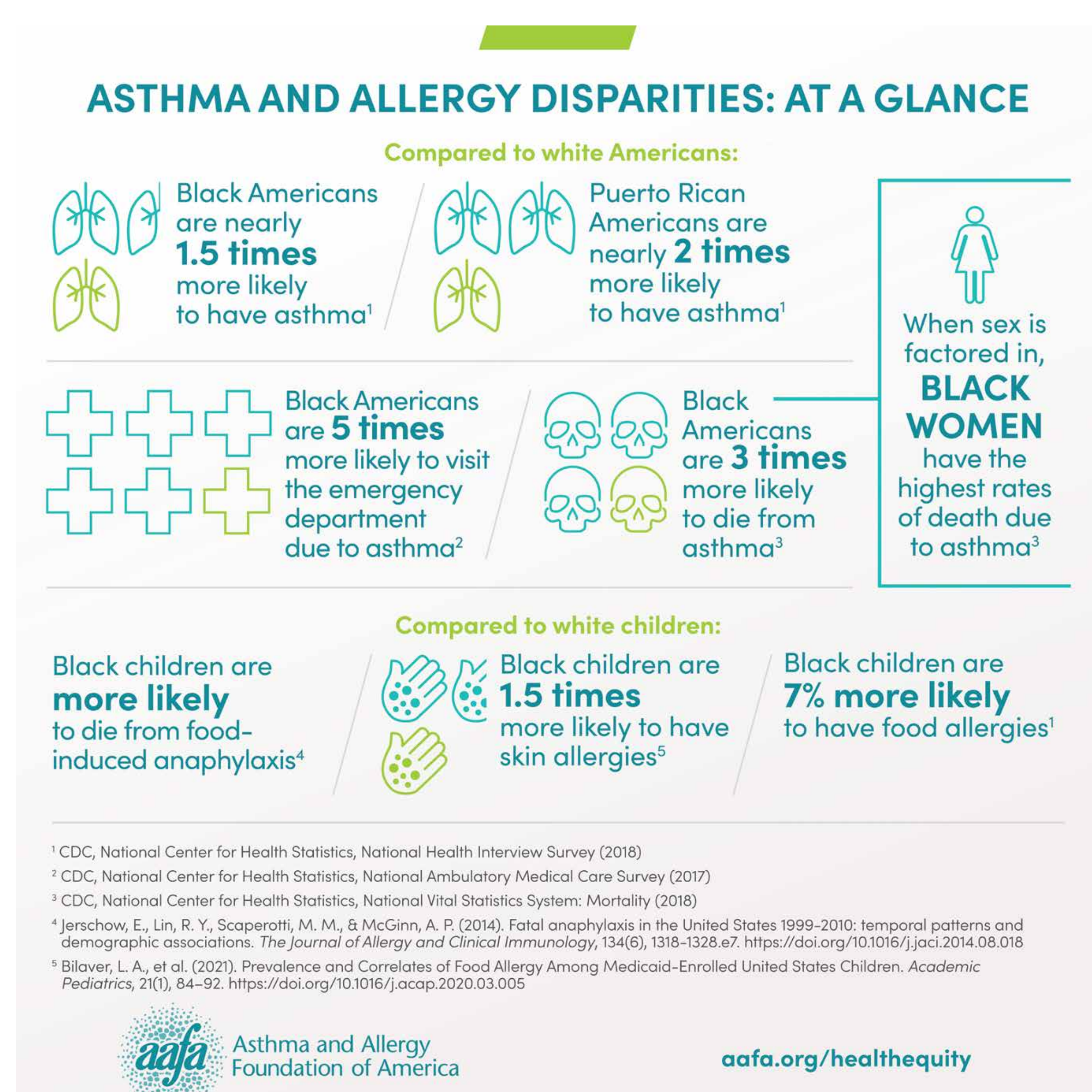
Asthma burden falls disproportionately on Black, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native populations.

Solution

The HEAL program combines AAFA national leadership with community-driven local action. AAFA funds and supports local pilot programs tailored to populations most impacted by asthma and allergic conditions. Programs are in cities including Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York City, and St. Louis. One program is being implemented across Alabama to learn more about innovations needed in rural communities.

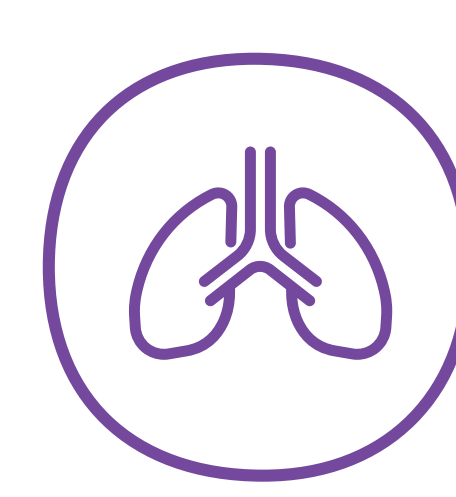


HEAL program goals are to:

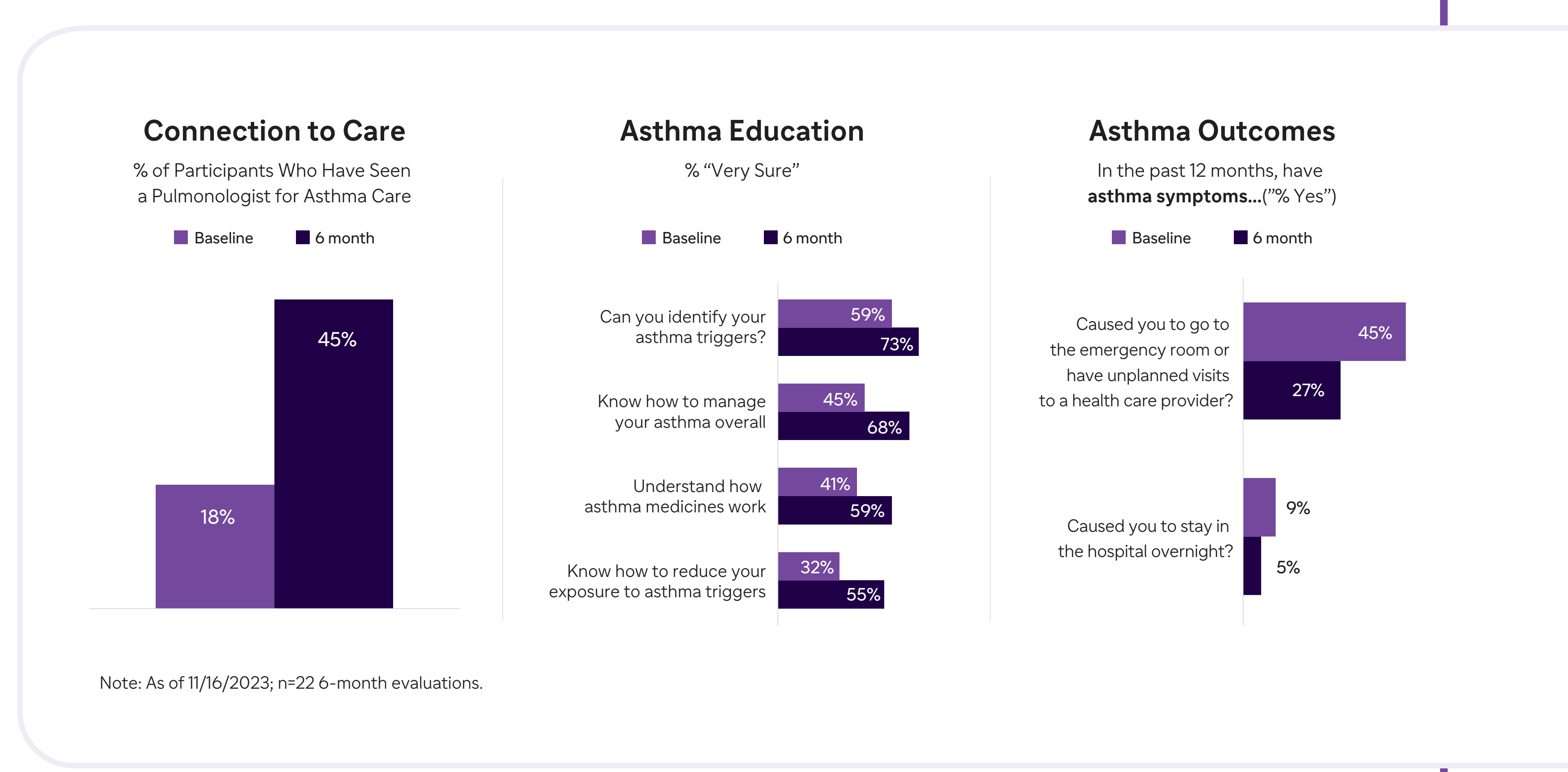
- Empower local organizations and partners
- Cultivate ideas and share best practices
- Build momentum in addressing asthma disparities
- Reduce deaths and hospitalizations due to asthma



Impact

Preliminary six-month data from the Detroit HEAL site show:

-  **150% increase** in participants who saw a pulmonologist. For many, it was their first time seeing an asthma specialist
-  **40% reduction** in unplanned ER and healthcare provider visits
-  Increases in asthma management **knowledge and confidence**



Key Learnings

- Community health workers play a critical role and help people better control their asthma.
- It takes time to enroll patients and deliver results, especially for adults who are less likely to prioritize asthma care. Allow several months for outreach and >1 year to start seeing results.
- Creative approaches are needed for issues that affect asthma such as food insecurity, risk of losing utilities, lack of transportation, and indoor/outdoor environmental impacts.