

Trusted Messengers: Virtual Asthma Coaching

Innovative virtual coaching program helps people with asthma, particularly those in under-resourced communities, to better understand their condition and improve their asthma self-management skills

Why It Matters

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Black people are 3 times more likely to die from asthma than non-Hispanic white people.
- Black children with asthma are 4.5 times more likely to be hospitalized than non-Hispanic white children.
- Hispanic/Latino people are twice as likely to visit the emergency department for asthma than non-Hispanic white people.
- Hispanic/Latino children are 40% more likely to die from asthma than non-Hispanic white children.

“Asthma coaching gave me the knowledge and confidence to control my asthma. I knew I had to be more active in my treatment and ask more direct questions to my doctor. Asthma coaching saved my life!”

—Sonya A., severe asthma patient

Solution

Accessible 1-on-1 coaching with six weeks of digital check-ins by a certified asthma educator, remote monitoring, and disease management tools using a smartphone, tablet, or computer.

The Virtual Asthma Coaching program is part of our Trusted Messengers health equity initiative. Working with doctors, asthma educators, physician assistants, respiratory therapists and other healthcare professionals, we partner with local trusted messengers such as church pastors and healthcare professionals at health fairs and community centers to screen people for asthma.

People found to be at high risk for moderate-to-severe asthma are invited to enroll in Virtual Asthma Coaching.

The program helps people learn successful ways to manage their condition. They can easily track their symptoms and progress with access to asthma support software.



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Impact

In 2022, 17 Trusted Messengers lung screening events engaged more than 2,500 people in communities nationwide, enrolling 217 adults in the Virtual Asthma Coaching program. Participants reported better knowledge in managing their asthma, fewer asthma attacks, and greater confidence in asking questions at their healthcare appointments.

Based on its success, in late 2022 AAN expanded Trusted Messengers and the Virtual Asthma Coaching program to address needs of Hispanic/Latino communities and offer sessions in Spanish.

People with very poorly controlled asthma reported:

- **2.42** fewer days with symptoms
- **1.33** fewer days of nighttime awakening due to asthma
- **1.63** fewer days using quick-relief medication

People who identified as Black reported:

- **1.53** fewer days with asthma symptoms
- **1.08** fewer days with nighttime awakenings due to asthma

People who had an annual income <\$50,000 reported:

- **2.25** fewer days with asthma symptoms, a decline of **1.47** days from baseline

Key Learnings

- One-on-one virtual asthma coaching with a trusted coach is an effective way to help people in under resourced communities learn how to manage their asthma better, improve their quality of life, and encourage people to participate in shared decision making.
- Social determinants of health need to be factored into digital platform design, including limited internet and smartphone access, to allow for full participation in under resourced communities.
- Participants want supplemental, culturally appropriate printed educational materials in their preferred language to complement the digital platform to reinforce learnings.

