

# Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Students and Asthma Initiative

Help young adults attending HBCUs better understand and manage their asthma symptoms as they navigate the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare

## Why It Matters

For many young people, college marks the beginning of adulthood and the first time living independently. This major life transition poses unique challenges for teens and young adults with asthma and can present new asthma triggers.

Lifestyle changes that are common to college life—irregular sleep patterns, inconsistent nutrition, and elevated levels of stress—have the potential to exacerbate asthma symptoms and the potential move away from an established health provider/asthma specialist can leave students without a physician to help manage their asthma.

For college students of color, the risk of poor asthma control is multiplied by the racial health disparities seen in asthma outcomes.

## Solution

Partnering with six HBCUs to provide our adult asthma self-management program, Breathe Well, Live Well (BWLW), to students who have asthma.

1. Train 2-3 university stakeholders per HBCU, who work with asthma patients, to be BWLW facilitators
2. Facilitator will lead BWLW sessions during spring, summer, and fall semesters. Participants will be identified through medical records/chart review for students who have uncontrolled asthma along with other recruitment methods like BWLW student testimonial video
3. Advisory group with students, healthcare providers, and university faculty to guide content throughout project to be sure it is culturally relevant for college and HBCU student audience. Feedback will be used to inform curriculum and program updates
4. Feedback throughout the program to track participant’s asthma control – symptoms, exacerbations, and emergency room visits (including health center visits) as well as participants’ perception of value of BWLW curriculum and digital app
5. Will develop white paper and/or abstract on results of initiative’s Phase 1 and 2 to be presented to the field via at least one conference during project period



## Impact

Results after completing the program include:

- Decrease from **23%** to **11%** in students who experienced limitations due to their asthma
- Increase from **77%** to **89%** in students who experienced minor or no limitations due to their asthma
- Students increase in their skills with **100%** (n=53) strongly agree/agreeing with the statement “I more strongly believe that I can take steps to control my asthma.”

- **98%** of respondents (n=52) strongly agree/agree with the statement: “I plan to use what I learned in this program to help control my asthma”
- In year 2, successfully recruited **6 new schools** (including 2 HBCU Community Colleges) and 6 returning schools.



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## Key Learnings

After completing the BWLW program, students report improved asthma outcomes and increased knowledge, confidence, and skills.

