

# Special Bulletin

For professional providers

April 30, 2024

## May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Spring is meant to be a joyful time, as flowers and trees begin blooming after a long, cold winter. But for people with asthma and allergies, spring also happens to be peak season for congestion, sneezing, and breathing issues.

In the United States, more than 100 million people have asthma and/or allergies. In 2021, children and adults with asthma experienced nearly 10 million asthma attacks. During that same year, 3,517 people died from asthma, according to the [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#).

### What Can Providers Do to Help Patients Manage Their Asthma

Here are some recommendations from the **Asthma Care Quick Reference Guide** that can be downloaded from the Provider Resource Center:

Encourage patients to manage their asthma by:

- **Self-monitoring** to assess level of asthma control and recognize signs of worsening asthma (either symptom or peak flow monitoring)
- **Taking their medication correctly** (inhaler technique, use of devices, understanding difference between long-term control and quick-relief medications)
  - **Long-term control medications** (such as inhaled corticosteroids, which reduce inflammation) prevent symptoms. Should be taken daily; will not give quick relief.
  - **Quick-relief medications** (short-acting beta2-agonists or SABAs) relax airway muscles to provide fast relief of symptoms.
- **Avoiding environmental factors** that worsen asthma.

### Resources

Highmark has the following educational resources available to help members better manage their asthma:

- Asthma Action Plan
- Asthma Quick Reference Guide

To view them, go to the **Provider Resource Center > EDUCATION/MANUALS > Educational Resources – Member And Provider**. Once on the page, scroll down to the **Provider Tools and Resources** section.

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