

Pojoaque Valley Public Schools:

Working together to reduce asthma triggers

The vision of the Pojoaque Valley Public Schools is to advance student success including academic achievement, growth, educational excellence, and well-being. Las Clinicas del Norte Pojoaque School Based Health Center serves the 3,000 students in the school district and sees its role as advancing well-being along with the school system.



While the school-based health center staff didn't have data on the number of students with asthma, they knew that Latinos are less likely to receive appropriate asthma medications for preventive care, acute exacerbations, or post-emergency department care, leading to poorer health outcomes. In this community, just north of Santa Fe, where 80% of students are Latino, the school-based health center staff knew asthma was a significant concern.

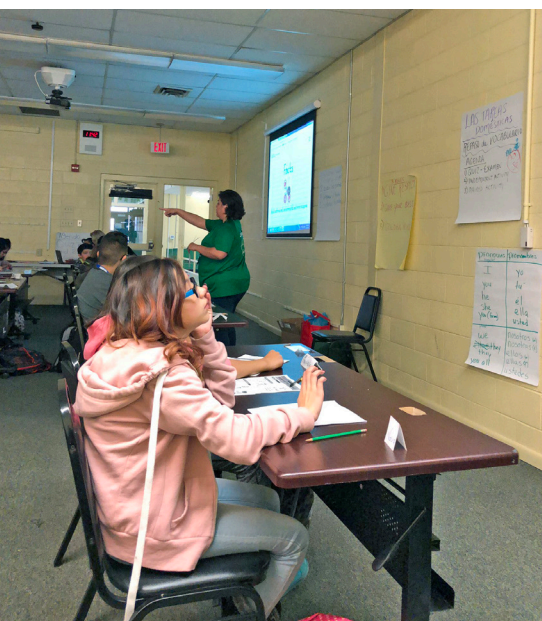
While they were already providing quality clinical care to students with asthma, they also wanted to focus on ways to reduce exposure to environmental asthma triggers. Recognizing that everyone in the school community has a role to play in reducing the presence of environmental asthma triggers, the clinic staff decided to educate everyone, not just students with asthma.

Luckily, due to their strong partnership with the school administrators, the clinic staff had the support they needed to go into the classroom to conduct education sessions. They met with all of the 6th grade science teachers to discuss their plan, which included education sessions, hands-on activities with lung models and pre/post-tests.

The students loved working with the lung models and were very engaged with the learning process. In fact, center staff said that one of their greatest challenges was "containing the excitement of the students." Most importantly, they learned a lot. In the pre-test, none of the students scored higher than 80% and half of them scored lower than that. But, by the post-test, there was a 100% pass rate.

"It was a good experience to see how interested the students were in learning about asthma triggers and how to prevent them."

— Roxanne Rodriguez, Las Clinicas del Norte staff



In addition to educating the students, clinic staff provided the teachers with checklists to help them identify environmental triggers in the classroom and gave them simple tips for reducing triggers. They also sent information home with the parents about identifying and reducing home environmental asthma triggers. The clinic staff are enthusiastic about building on this success and plan to expand upon the medical services for middle school students, including offering telehealth visits focused on asthma.

"I had a lot of fun interacting with the students with the lung models and explaining the effects that asthma has on the lungs."

— Rachel Valencia, clinic staff

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