Improving Access to Asthma Medication in School

In a classroom of 30 students, an average of three students will have asthma—a chronic lung disease that makes breathing difficult. Asthma is one of the biggest contributors to school absences, with over 10 million missed school days annually in the United States. School District and school asthma policies and procedures are lacking, despite over 7 million children in America living with asthma.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws allowing students to carry and use quick-relief inhalers to help reduce the number of asthma emergencies in the classroom, but many children still must visit the school nurses’ office in order to access life-saving medication.

If you are interested in more asthma information and resources from the American Lung Association, or how your school can become an Asthma Friendly School, please contact AFSIChampion@Lung.org.

The American Lung Association has developed materials to help school districts and independent schools to improve access to asthma medication for students with asthma.

- **Asthma Medication Template Policy**
  School Districts and schools can use this template resource to adopt a stock bronchodilator policy to ensure access and availability to back-up medication using standing orders for quick-relief medicine.

- **Student Readiness Assessment Tool**
  School nurses and parents can use this online tool to gauge a child’s readiness to carry and administer their quick-relief inhaler.

- **Student Readiness Online Learning Module**
  Through an interactive online course, school health staff and other designated school personnel can learn how to assess a child’s readiness to carry and use a quick-relief inhaler.

- **Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative**
  Schools are an important part of the overall health and well-being of a child with asthma. This framework provides guidance for schools to create a long-term asthma management plan, including: maximizing school health services, providing asthma education, proving a healthy school environment, and managing physical education and activity.