

## COLD HOMES AND ASTHMA

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cold homes can exacerbate asthma. Lack of heat in a home can contribute to the accumulation of moisture/condensation and the growth of mold and mites. Keeping room air at least 65 degrees during the heating season helps reduce humidity. In addition to asthma, cold homes can negatively affect other health problems such as heart disease and mental illness.

### BACKGROUND

- Some low-income families keep their heat turned off during the cold weather months because they can't afford to heat their homes.

### ASSESSMENT

- Ask clients what problems they have in keeping their homes heated during the cold weather months.
- Check the humidity and temperature in the house. It should be < 50% humidity and at least 65 degrees (during the heating season).
- Determine if the home needs weatherization assistance to be heated efficiently.
- Check if the house has a working thermostat. Make sure the client knows how to use it.
- Check if the heating system works and is safe (e.g. has a filter if forced air) before encouraging the client to use it.

### EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES

- Keeping the home temperature at least 65 degrees during the cold weather months is important in preventing the development of asthma triggers such as mold and moisture.

## ACTIONS

CHW ACTIONS	PARTICIPANT ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine if the family has difficulty heating their home during the cold weather months. If yes, offer the following resources:</li> </ul> <p>Puget Sound Energy/Salvation Army Warm Home Fund</p> <p>Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program</p> <p>Puget Sound Energy's Home Energy Lifeline Program (HELP)</p> <p>A call to 1-888-225-5773 can provide information about all these programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your home between 64 and 68 degrees during the cold weather months.</li> <li>• Identify needs you have regarding home heating or weatherization.</li> <li>• Follow-up on referrals provided by your CHW.</li> </ul>

## SUPPLIES

- None

## EDUCATION HANDOUTS REFERRALS