

Healthy Hoops®

Using Sports to Promote Health Management and Education



The AmeriHealth Mercy Family of Companies



About Healthy Hoops®

Healthy Hoops® is an innovative asthma management program that uses basketball as a platform to teach children with asthma and their families how to manage the disease through proper nutrition, exercise, and appropriate medication use. The program features hands-on asthma education, asthma and various other health screenings, nutrition education, plus basketball clinics for the children taught by local and regional basketball legends. The program also aims to decrease childhood obesity and increase cardiovascular activity.

In 2003, an AmeriHealth Mercy affiliate, Keystone Mercy Health Plan, noted a sharp increase in the number of pediatric members diagnosed with asthma, primarily in West Philadelphia. Corresponding to the increase in asthma diagnoses were increases in emergency room visits and hospitalizations. To address this growing problem, Keystone Mercy created Healthy Hoops in collaboration with the Healthy Hoops Coalition made up of local health organizations and basketball coaches, and supported by an educational grant from AstraZeneca. The goal was to reduce the racial disparity gap of children with asthma, the most common chronic disease among children in America, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

As of 2008, more than 2,500 children and their family members have participated in the Healthy Hoops program nationally.

Healthy Hoops® Making a Difference

A study of Healthy Hoops participants attending events in Philadelphia in both 2006 and 2007 showed a significant improvement in asthma management and quality of life after one year.

Based on claims data:

- **Emergency room visits related to asthma attacks decreased 6.4 percent.**
- **Inpatient visits due to asthma-related problems decreased 22.2 percent.**
- **Healthy Hoops participants also use their medicines more effectively.**
Healthy Hoops participants on average showed an 11.7 percent increase in the use of controller medications which help reduce severe asthma attacks.
- **Healthy Hoops participants showed greater lung capacity and strength.**
68 percent of participants either improved or maintained stable FEV₁ measurements, and 62 percent of participants either improved or maintained stable FVC measurements.

In addition, 96.8 percent of participating parents surveyed found that Healthy Hoops helped them to better manage their child's asthma, and 86 percent noted that Healthy Hoops improved asthma management for another family member who was not a participant. Furthermore, 83.9 percent of primary care providers found enhanced treatment adherence.





Case Study

The following is a case study of the savings – and improved health – of a 10-year-old girl with asthma who started participating in the Philadelphia-area Healthy Hoops program in 2004.

Services	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
ER Visits Costs	\$255.00	\$197.15	\$411.30	\$92.11	\$0
Inpatient Admission Costs	\$31,040.00	\$9,959.00	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$31,295.00	\$10,156.15	\$411.30	\$92.11	\$0

Emergency room and inpatient admissions decreased in cost by \$31,202 between 2003 and 2007.

Healthy Hoops® Recognition

- Healthy Hoops was recognized by the NCQA for the 2006 Innovative Practices in Multicultural Health Care Award.
- In 2007, the Healthy Hoops asthma management and prevention program was presented as a case study at a European convention on ethical health promotions. The conference, held in Belgium, examined the moral necessity of addressing health inequalities across all populations, with a specific focus on health promotion programs that seek to address these.



Fast Facts About Asthma and Children (from the 2006 National Health Interview Survey)



- In 2006, 9.9 million U.S. children under 18 years of age (14%) have been diagnosed with asthma; 6.8 million children (9%) still have asthma.
- Children in poor families were more likely to have been diagnosed with asthma or to still have asthma (18% and 14%) than children in families that were not poor (13% and 8%).
- In 2006, non-Hispanic black children were more likely to have been diagnosed with asthma or to still have asthma (17% and 13%) than Hispanic children (13% and 9%) or non-Hispanic white children (13% and 9%).

About the AmeriHealth Mercy Family of Companies

The AmeriHealth Mercy Family of Companies is a mission-driven organization, dedicated to ensuring the delivery of quality health care to low-income populations covered by publicly funded programs throughout the United States. With more than 20 years of experience exclusively serving the Medicaid population, AmeriHealth Mercy and its affiliates comprise the largest organization of Medicaid managed care plans in the United States, touching the lives of more than 6.2 million members nationwide. Please visit www.amerihealthmercy.com for more information.



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