

Our Mission

Breathe California fights lung disease in all its forms and works with its communities to protect lung health. Since 1911, our local non-profit agency has carried out this mission through a host of critical programs and services. Starting as the Tuberculosis Society and working under three other names, including most recently the American Lung Association of Santa Clara-San Benito Counties (1970-2005), our dedication has always been to improve the quality of life enjoyed throughout the valley.

We believe that the most significant impact on people's lives takes place through local interaction. Our key roles have been to establish tobacco-free communities, achieve healthy air quality and fight lung diseases such as asthma and tuberculosis. Prevention is our priority. Through education, political advocacy, cutting-edge research and patient services, we use a comprehensive approach to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce the impact of lung disease. As a completely independent agency, we can use innovative approaches and rapidly respond to address local lung health needs.

Generous contributions from individuals, as well as gifts and grants from corporations, foundations and government agencies allow us to lead the fight against the #3 killer in America: lung disease. We partner with a host of local organizations to reach every one of our diverse communities. With a committed core of volunteers and staff who hold hope, determination, action and vigilance as the cornerstones to creating change, we will continue our drive to ensure that we can all breathe easier.



Core Activities

Tobacco Control Programs

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death, killing close to half-a-million Americans annually. Furthermore, a growing body of evidence has shown the deadly effects that secondhand smoke can have on us, especially our children. While we enjoy the lowest smoking rate in the state (12.3% in 2005), in Santa Clara County alone, tobacco use is responsible for 9,000 deaths and \$645 million in health costs annually. We seek to reduce the impact of tobacco use and addiction through a number of programs including:



- § 8-week group-support smoking cessation classes
- § Self-help quitting programs for adults, seniors and pregnant women
- § *CLASP* - a peer education program to teach teenagers techniques to recognize and resist the pressures related to smoking
- § *Quit the Hits* - unique and proven program to help high-risk teens stay tobacco-free
- § *Smokeless Saturday® Diversion Class* - a program that utilizes education as an alternative for minors cited for possession of tobacco products and paraphernalia
- § In-service training for teachers to reach teens on smoking and health issues
- § College Advocacy Project - program offers campuses assistance to implement tobacco control measures
- § *Secondhand Smoke Helpline* - (408) 999-0500 where calls are confidential

- § *Community Connections* - a project addressing vulnerable and underserved populations in our local communities

Asthma Services

In California, as many as 1 in 5 children may be suffering from asthma. Asthma is the leading cause of chronic illness in children and the #1 source of school absences among chronic diseases. Across the nation, the disease is responsible for two million emergency room visits and \$16 billion in healthcare costs. In an effort to reduce the burden of asthma, we offer:

- § School-Site Asthma Education - a multi-week, comprehensive, self-management program for children with asthma; preschool, elementary and middle school courses are offered
- § Training for parents, faculty, school staff, child care providers, as well as nurses and other health professionals
- § *Parents of Asthmatic Children® (PAC) Support Group* - meetings offer families asthma resources and support
- § *Camp Superstuff®* - unique summer camp experience for asthmatic children, blending asthma education and traditional camp fun
- § Asthma screening for children and adults
- § *Living with Asthma Nights* - educational presentations throughout the community for patients of all ages and their families



Clean Air Programs

High levels of particle and ozone pollution continue to pose a serious health risk to residents in the Bay Area. Air pollution can lead to the onset of asthma, decreased lung function and even death. In addition, as more than 90% of our time is spent indoors, a greater focus must be placed on improving indoor air quality. Programs that address this growing health threat include:

- § *Clean Air Awards* - program which recognizes individuals and organizations that make significant contributions to improving regional air quality
- § Home Risk Assessments - a service to help families identify indoor air hazards in the home that can aggravate allergies, asthma and other lung-related conditions
- § *Tools for Schools®* - on-site environmental assessments and training for school faculty and staff to assist them in improving indoor air quality throughout campus and in the classroom
- § Transportation projects, which include promotion of alternatively fueled vehicles, public transit, carpooling, car care, etc.
- § Programs to reduce the environmental impact of wood-burning

Core Activities

Lung Health Services

Lung disease causes 1 in 7 deaths and afflicts more than 850,000 people in the Bay Area. Lung disease and other respiratory problems also account for the leading cause of death in babies one-year-old and younger. We seek to improve patients' quality of life by offering:

- § *Better Breathers Club®* - support groups and education for individuals with chronic lung disease and their family members
- § *Breathing Improvement Class* - a pulmonary rehabilitation course for COPD patients
- § Tuberculosis speakers bureau
- § Influenza and pneumonia prevention programs to encourage immunization and publicize current flu-related issues
- § Up-to-date information on emerging or timely lung issues, such as bioterrorism threats, avian flu and natural disasters

Community Education

In addition to helping those affected by lung disease, we educate the public about key lung health issues, as well as the impact and prevention of lung disease through:

- § School programs that help children make wise health decisions early in life

- § Community health fairs and presentations
- § Multicultural Programs - utilizing a comprehensive outreach strategy to fight lung disease among diverse populations
- § Speakers bureau
- § Resource library open to the public
- § Free newsletters and educational literature
- § Professional continuing education courses and in-service trainings
- § Forums to explore a community response to emerging lung health issues

Advocacy Programs

Having worked at the forefront of tobacco control and clean air advocacy for the past three decades, we fight to ensure that our communities are provided with crucial lung disease resources and protected from threats to lung health. We influence laws and regulations affecting our communities by:

- § Mobilizing community building capacity
- § Providing authoritative information to local policymakers
- § Speaking on various lung health issues at local hearings and community meetings

Research Projects

Research is one of the keys to reducing the impact of lung disease in our communities. Thus, our agency is committed to funding, supporting and participating in:

- § Research Grants
- § Scholarships to ensure that we have adequate health care personnel
- § Community assessments and compilation of the latest statistics on lung disease

Join the Effort



Volunteer with the Agency

Breathe California provides an avenue for people to get involved in meaningful volunteer work to fight lung disease and improve other people's lives. As one of the nation's oldest voluntary health agencies, we welcome you to become involved in any one of our many community-based projects.

Support our Mission

Help us fight lung disease in our community! Contributions to our 501(c)3 non-profit organization (Tax ID 94-1156307) are tax-deductible and will help us continue our charitable mission. You can also provide for the future of our local agency by including us in your will, trust, gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or other estate-planning tool.

Contact Us

To donate, volunteer, or for information on one of our programs, please contact us at:

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Celebrating Every Breath

Protecting Health in Santa Clara Valley Since 1911

