

## **LINKAGE OF ASTHMA MORBIDITY AND HAZARDOUS AIR POLLUTANTS IN NEW JERSEY**

**2003**

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) has established a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) under the program entitled *Asthma and Hazardous Substances: Applied Research and Development*.

Funding provided by this cooperative agreement will allow NJDHSS to develop and implement research protocols to: 1) examine relationships between New Jersey asthma hospitalization rates and the National-Scale Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) estimates at the municipal geographic level; 2) conduct temporal analyses of asthma morbidity and air toxics monitoring site data in four select New Jersey locations (Camden, Chester, Elizabeth and New Brunswick); and 3) work with communities involved in the project to provide assistance and information related to project findings.

Detailed air toxics monitoring and asthma morbidity data are available for New Jersey. The asthmagens included in this study are cadmium, chromium, formaldehyde and nickel. This is the first attempt in New Jersey to link asthma morbidity with air toxics in the city of Camden. NJDHSS is engaged in ongoing community involvement activities in the city of Camden. Collaborating groups and institutions in Camden include the county health department, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), several community-based organizations, and the Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC). A working group coordinated by AHEC is meeting regularly to discuss environmental health evaluation and education issues and this group will be used as a basis for planning community involvement and health education activities. Results of the cooperative agreement program will be shared with the working group, and NJDHSS will seek the assistance of working group members in the dissemination of study results to the community members, health care providers and the scientific community. Other communities involved in this study will be contacted following the same model developed for the Camden City community.

The project will be led by NJDHSS Consumer and Environmental Health Services. The primary collaborating institutions are NJDEP (Bureau of Air Monitoring and Bureau of Air Quality Evaluation) and the NJDHSS Material and Child Health Epidemiology unit in the Division of

Family Health Services. Advisors to the project will include the State Epidemiologist, and representatives from the NJDHSS Occupational Health Service and the NJDEP Division of Science, Research and Technology.

The results of the proposed *Asthma and Hazardous Substances: Applied Research and Development* cooperative agreement project may be useful to other community organizations who represent residents of affected areas. Information can be shared to foster prevention and community activities which promote public health.