Asthma is the most prevalent condition among infants and children up to age 17.\(^1\)\(^2\) There are nearly 1.5 million children in California that have asthma, and the condition makes it difficult for this group to exercise, play, and attend school.\(^3\) The causes of asthma are complex, but there are risk factors such as exposure to air pollution that are at least partially modifiable.\(^4\)

There is evidence that children unable to manage their asthma tend to utilize emergency departments (ED) at increased rates.\(^5\) As such, better management of this chronic disease is critical to reducing ED visits and improving the quality of life for children with asthma.\(^6\)

The statewide ED visit rate for asthma was 73.0 per 10,000 children aged 0 to 17. This was similar to the rate for the Medi-Cal population of 72.6 per 10,000.\(^7\) As with Californians overall,\(^3\) there were strong racial/ethnic disparities among children in the Medi-Cal program. For example, African Americans were over eight times more likely than Asians/Pacific Islanders to visit the ED for asthma-related complications (see Figure below).

### Figure

![Emergency Department Visits due to Asthma for Medi-Cal Children Aged 0-17, by Race/Ethnicity, 2010](image)


Note: Members eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid were excluded.