



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORK GROUP

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

The **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORK GROUP** is a community alliance of schools, city health and recreation agencies, nonprofits, businesses, policymakers and others who live, work, and play in Alexandria.

Our **MISSION** is to work collaboratively through community-driven, interdisciplinary efforts to:

- Reduce and prevent environmentally related chronic and respiratory diseases through the minimization of exposure to environmental health hazards; and
- Improve access to and use of the natural and built environments – the public and open spaces we play in, streets and trails we travel, and essential goods and services we need.

WHY? In the 2007 Community Environmental Health Assessment, Alexandria residents identified areas of particular concern¹:

- 87.4% said safety when walking
- 85.5% said safety when driving
- 79.4% did not believe there was enough park land
- 75.2% did not believe there were enough trails for walking & biking
- 72.0% were concerned about their safety when biking
- 72.2% said tobacco smoke
- 71.2% were concerned about mold & mildew

In addition:

- Alexandria asthma hospital discharge rate (per 10,000) is 12.1 compared to 6.1 and 7 in Arlington and Fairfax, respectively².
- The American Lung Association estimates that in Alexandria: 83 new cases of lung cancer are diagnosed each year; 1,296 persons have emphysema; and 4,063 persons who have chronic bronchitis³.

WHO? The Environmental Health Work Group was created in August 2008 as part of the *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria* (<http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership>). We are in still in the strategic planning process and seeking members with interest or expertise in built environment and respiratory health issues.

WHAT? Here's how we define it: The environment is the world around us. Environmental health focuses on the interrelations of people and their environments, promotes human health and well being, prevents disease, and fosters a safe and healthful environment. Throughout our lives, it impacts our health through the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the streets we travel, the land we use, and the places we live.



Get involved! If you're interested in joining one of these efforts, please contact Carrie Fesperman, Health Planner for the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, at Carrie.Fesperman@vdh.Virginia.gov or (703) 838-4400 x263.

We are looking for members with interest and/or expertise in the areas of respiratory health and the built environment.

¹ http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership/about_us.html

² Asthma in Virginia, A comprehensive data report, 2006

³ "State of the Air, 2008", American Lung Association