

# **SIUE We Care Student Nurses Discuss Asthma and Health Equity During EPA's Environmental Justice Week**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
November 10 2023 2:55 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Black children are more likely to live in communities with higher-than-normal limits of ambient air pollution and attend schools located near significant environmental pollutants. These bleak statistics were just a few of many shared by Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, RN, CCP, associate professor in the SIUE School of Nursing (SON) and director of the SIUE WE CARE Clinic in East St. Louis.



Ampadu and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students Julia Buckles and Jewel Radford gave a presentation on Health Equity and Environmental Justice during the Environmental Protection Agency's virtual Explore Environmental Justice Week Series from Oct. 30-Nov. 3.

The subject of the presentation was asthma, its environmental causes, and the systemic factors that impede the health and wellness of Black and Brown communities, according to Ampadu. Documentation from the presentation was taken from Buckles and Radford's DNP project that focused on asthma, along with information about the WE CARE Clinic's Asthma Trigger Assessment Program (ATAP).

Addressing air quality mitigation is a key factor in asthma management and prevention, noted Buckles and Radford.

"Increased exposure to poor air quality in childhood is a significant risk factor for the development of asthma (Brumberg et al., 2021)," wrote Buckles and Radford.

The students also noted that children living in areas with higher air pollution have increased incidence of asthma-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations and exacerbations.

“The racial and socioeconomic disparity of asthma prevalence is strongly linked to air quality,” concluded Buckles and Radford.

Ampadu also shared information about ATAP. “The WE CARE Clinic's asthma program provides free in-home assessments and remediation to clients with asthma who consent to participate. We have seen an improvement in several outcomes as it relates to the management of asthma in the home. Since our program is limited to in-home assessments, we often see exacerbation of symptoms due to environmental issues. Therefore, sustained improvement is limited.”

ATAP was made possible by a four-year grant from the Illinois Asthma Plan (IAP). The grant was first awarded in 2021 and will end in 2024.

For more information on the Clinic's asthma program or to see if you are eligible, please contact the WE CARE Clinic at 618 482-6959 or [jerphil@siue.edu](mailto:jerphil@siue.edu).

The WE CARE Clinic provides primary patient care at 601 James R. Thompson Blvd. on the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus in Building D. Staff includes four advanced Nurse Practitioners, a collaborating physician, a licensed clinical social worker, certified health coaches and a doctorally prepared pharmacist. Comprehensive services are available to the Clinic's diverse clients who reside in the Metro East and surrounding communities.