



April 24, 2024

Dear Senator/Representative:

The undersigned health organizations write to thank you for your previous funding support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Asthma Control Program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and ask for your strong support again in FY 2025. Specifically, we ask that you support a \$6.5 million increase in funding for CDC's National Asthma Control Program, bringing funding to \$40 million for FY25, as part of your FY25 requests.

Asthma is a complex, multifactorial disease that requires a comprehensive approach. Currently, 23 states, Houston, TX, and Puerto Rico receive critical funding from CDC's National Asthma Control Program (NACP) to support state and local efforts to reduce the burden of asthma. Our request for \$40 million in funding for the NACP will ensure the program can fund additional states and enable CDC to work with states and communities most impacted by asthma in order to save lives, reduce healthcare spending, and improve productivity. This increase in funding would also allow CDC to expand the Asthma Call-Back Survey to more states, thereby facilitating the comprehensive nationwide collection of critical asthma surveillance data necessary for effective policy planning and implementation.

Asthma remains a serious and costly health issue in our nation. More than 26 million people in the U.S. have asthma, of whom 4.5 million are children. Asthma is a leading cause of hospitalizations and school absences due to a chronic disease among children. In addition to its toll on health, asthma imposes a huge financial cost, resulting in annual health care expenditures, lost productivity and mortality totaling over \$80 billion. Furthermore, asthma causes more than 7.9 million missed school days and 10.9 million missed workdays every year. Tragically, while most deaths caused by asthma can be prevented, this disease still claims the lives of several thousand individuals in the United States each year. In 2021, asthma took the lives of over 3,500 people.

The National Asthma Control Program is making a difference in improving disease outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. Since the inception of the National Asthma Control Program in 1999, asthma mortality rates have decreased by 44%. While the number of people living with asthma has increased, research shows that people with asthma are better managing their disease. Through its Controlling Childhood Asthma, Reducing Emergencies (CCARE) initiative, CDC has set a goal of preventing half a million asthma related hospitalizations and emergency department visits among children. To accomplish this for all asthma patients, CDC has also developed and worked to raise awareness of EXHALE, a set of six key asthma control strategies to better control asthma and decrease healthcare costs. Funding for additional states would be an important step in making progress towards these goals.

While asthma impacts people of all ages across our nation, racial and ethnic disparities in the burden of asthma persist. Asthma rates are highest among Black and Indigenous (American Indian/Alaska Native) adults in the U.S. According to 2018 to 2020 data from CDC, Black individuals in the U.S. (10.8%) were 30% more likely than white individuals in the U.S. (7.6%) to have asthma. Black individuals are three times more likely to die from asthma than white individuals. Black individuals with asthma are also five times more likely to be treated for asthma in hospital emergency departments, which signals their asthma is not well-controlled.

The NACP also works with communities that are affected by wildfire smoke and excessive heat. As the number and severity of wildfires increases in the U.S., it is important for people living with asthma in affected states to ensure they take measures to protect themselves at home, work and school from wildfire smoke. In recent years, the U.S. has also experienced an increase in the frequency, duration and intensity of heatwaves. Recognizing that extreme heat seriously exacerbates asthma symptoms especially among children, in April, the CDC will launch a new tool and introduce new clinical guidance aimed at protecting the most vulnerable. This will further allow the NACP to help states and localities ensure that people with asthma and their caregivers have the tools necessary to reduce exposure to wildfire smoke and extreme heat in addition to sharing tools to keep their asthma under control. We know that when it comes to asthma management, an investment made today will save money tomorrow.

We ask for your leadership in ensuring that CDC's National Asthma Control Program maintains and builds upon its success by supporting funding in FY25 of at least \$40 million.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Association for Respiratory Care
American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology
American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST)
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Asthma & Allergy Network
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Big Cities Health Coalition

Children's Environmental Health Network
Coalition of Health Education Organizations
First Focus on Children
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Schools Network
International WELL Building Institute
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Healthy Housing
National League for Nursing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Regional Asthma Management & Prevention
Trust for America's Health