



March 20, 2023

Dear Senator/Representative:

Our 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) 2023 and ask for your strong support again in FY 2024. **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 FY24.**

Currently, 23 states, Houston, TX, and Puerto Rico receive critical funding from the National Asthma Control Program to support state and local efforts to reduce the burden of asthma. This year, there will be a new notice of funding opportunity allowing all states and territories to compete to receive funding through the National Asthma Control Program. Our request for \$40 million in funding for the National Asthma Control Program will ensure the program can fund additional states and enable CDC to work with states and communities to address the terrible human and economic burden caused by asthma. This increase in funding would also allow CDC to expand the Asthma Call-Back Survey to more states, thereby facilitating the 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 25 million Americans have asthma, of whom 4.2 million are children. Asthma is a leading cause of hospitalizations and school absences due to a chronic disease among children. It is responsible for approximately \$50 billion annually in healthcare costs, \$3 billion in missed school and workdays, and \$29 billion from mortality. 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.

While asthma impacts people of all ages across our nation, racial and ethnic disparities in the burden of asthma persist. Black and Indigenous (American Indian/Alaska Native) communities have the highest

current asthma rates compared to other races and ethnicities, and Puerto Ricans living in the continental U.S. have the highest asthma rates of any racial or ethnic group. According to 2018 to 2020 data from CDC, Black Americans (10.8%) were 30% more likely than white Americans (7.6%) to have asthma. Black Americans are three times more likely to die from asthma than white Americans. 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 National Asthma Control Program is making a difference in improving disease outcomes. Since the inception of the National Asthma Control Program in 1999, death rates have decreased by 41%. While the number of people living with asthma has increased, research shows that people with asthma are better managing their disease. The number of people having asthma attacks decreased by 16% from 2001 to 2018. 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 and to improve health outcomes for all asthma patients, CDC has also developed and worked to raise awareness of EXHALE, a set of six key asthma control strategies. Funding for additional states would be an important step in making progress towards these goals.

Asthma is a complex, multifactorial disease that requires a comprehensive approach. Public health programs that reduce the burden of asthma must include surveillance, environmental measures to reduce exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollutants, awareness and self-management education and appropriate healthcare services. 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 FY24 of at least \$40 million.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Association for Respiratory Care
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Chest Physicians
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
First Focus Campaign for Children
National Association of School Nurses
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Trust for America's Health