



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Highlights Significant Impacts of Asthma and Allergic Diseases for Awareness Month**

**Washington, DC – May 1, 2019** – Since 1984, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) has dedicated May to National Asthma and Allergy Awareness. People with asthma and allergies frequently manage multiple health conditions and are burdened with significant impacts on their physical, emotional, social and financial health.

Then President, Ronald Reagan, stated in the first proclamation, “Asthma and allergic diseases are among the Nation’s most common and costly health problems. More than 35 million Americans suffer from these diseases – about one out of every six persons. The American public pays approximately \$4 billion per year in medical bills directly related to the treatment and diagnosis of asthma and allergic diseases, and another \$2 billion per year in indirect social costs.”

Today, it is estimated over 65 million people in the United States have asthma and allergic diseases such as pollen allergies and food allergies. The costs have increased to over \$50 billion for direct medical costs, \$3 billion for missed work and school days and \$29 billion due to asthma-related mortality to total about \$82 billion in costs to society.

“These diseases now affect one out of every five Americans. Despite advancements in research, medicine and public policy, these chronic conditions are still some of the most costly for individuals and society,” states Kenneth Mendez, AAFA’s CEO and president. “Sadly, ten people die each day from asthma - and we know that’s ten too many.”

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America is raising awareness about how to manage the wide-ranging impact of these conditions and overcome the challenges they present. The foundation is running a month-long campaign to inspire hope and reinforce that people are *More Than Asthma* and *More Than Food Allergies*.

Notable activities during National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month include:

- May 1-31 #MoreThanAsthma [Photo Contest](#)
- May 7 AAFA releases 2019 [Asthma Capitals](#) report on World Asthma Day
- May 7 #AsthmaHealth Twitter chat at 2:30pm ET co-hosted with the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology (AAAAI)
- May 12-18 Food Allergy Awareness Week  
#MoreThanFoodAllergies [Photo Contest](#)
- May 15 #FoodAllergy101 Twitter chat at noon ET co-hosted with AAAAI



About 26 million people living in the United States have asthma, a chronic lifelong disease that affects the lungs. Asthma can cause wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and coughing. Although asthma cannot be cured, it is possible to manage asthma to reduce and prevent asthma attacks by avoiding

asthma triggers like tobacco smoke, mold, air pollution, and colds and flu. Asthma episodes can also be prevented by using prescribed daily long-term control medicines correctly. Up to 80% of people with asthma also have allergies.

Nasal allergies affect about 50 million people, seasonal pollen allergies afflict about 25 million and it is estimated that 32 million people in the US have food allergies. Allergy symptoms can include itchiness, hives and sneezing and some allergic reactions can progress to a life-threatening condition known as anaphylaxis.

“Although asthma and allergies can’t be cured, they can be managed. But management involves daily vigilance to avoid triggers and this can strain household finances and relationships,” states Melanie Carver, AAFA’s vice president of community health and services. “Asthma and allergy triggers are found in homes, workplaces, schools, outdoor air, indoor air, public venues – we hear from our online community that it can be overwhelming.”

Despite these burdens, people with asthma and allergies can successfully navigate the challenges of managing their health conditions. Learn more at [www.aafa.org/awarenessmonth](http://www.aafa.org/awarenessmonth).

### **About AAFA**

Celebrating more than 65 years of service, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is the oldest and largest nonprofit patient organization for asthma and allergies. Its mission is to save lives and reduce the burden of disease for people with asthma and allergies through support, advocacy, education and research. AAFA provides community-based services through its digital communities and network of local chapters and support groups. AAFA educates patients with practical information about disease management. AAFA also helps consumers identify products suitable for those with asthma and allergies through the asthma & allergy friendly® Certification Program. For more information, visit [aafa.org](http://aafa.org).

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