



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Announces 2019 Asthma Capitals

Springfield, MA Tops List Second Year in a Row

WASHINGTON, DC - May 7, 2019 – Today, on World Asthma Day, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), a leading patient advocacy organization in the United States representing more than 60 million Americans with asthma or allergies, released its 2019 Asthma Capitals™ report. The report identifies the 100 most challenging places to live with asthma in the U.S.

The top 10 Asthma Capitals for 2019 are:

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| 1. Springfield, MA | 6. Allentown, PA |
| 2. Dayton, OH | 7. Louisville, KY |
| 3. Greensboro, NC | 8. Boston, MA |
| 4. Philadelphia, PA | 9. Omaha, NE |
| 5. Cleveland, OH | 10. Milwaukee, WI |

To view the complete list of the top 100 cities, visit www.asthmacapitals.com.

Cities are ranked based on asthma-related health outcomes: prevalence, emergency room visits and mortality. The report also looks at risk factors that contribute to these outcomes, including poverty, air quality, access to specialists, pollen counts, medicine use, tobacco policies and the rate of uninsured residents. The 2019 Asthma Capitals™ report is an independent research project of AAFA made possible by Sanofi Genzyme and Regeneron.

AAFA President and CEO, Kenneth Mendez, states “We publish the Asthma Capitals to help those who live in these cities recognize, prevent and manage asthma symptoms. The research helps highlight how communities can make improvements to better serve their residents with asthma. By using this information, communities can see where they can direct their focus to make improvements and reduce the impact of asthma.”

Eye on Springfield

Last year’s asthma capital, Springfield, Massachusetts, is again the most challenging place in the U.S. to live with asthma. It ranked #1 for its high asthma prevalence and high number of asthma-related emergency room visits. AAFA met with Senator Eric Lesser of Massachusetts to get his thoughts on the problem:



“We are in the valley which exacerbates some of the pollution dynamics. And we have an industrial heritage here in Springfield.” When those companies left, Springfield not only lost jobs. It was “also left with a major environmental legacy”, Senator Lesser stated.

There is hope for improvement though. When asked what is being done to help his constituents with asthma, Senator Lesser shared examples of

- a) providing better public transit and rail service to take more cars off the road
- b) promoting electric vehicles through rebates
- c) creating incentives for energy efficient homes to rely less on power plants

Senator Lesser believes “we need to do more to raise public consciousness” about asthma. “You have to take on the socio-economic issues. You have to take on the environmental issues. And you have to take on the issues like pollution that require a major mobilization to get done.”

About the Research

The Asthma Capitals™ ranking is an annual research and educational project of AAFA, designed to help patients recognize, prevent and manage asthma symptoms. Through this ranking, AAFA raises awareness about the impact of asthma and highlights how communities can make improvements to better serve their residents and visitors with asthma. The ranking is based on asthma prevalence, emergency room visits and mortality rates. The report also looks at risk factors, including poverty, air quality and access to specialists. Visit www.asthmacapitals.com to see the full list of 100 cities, methodology and learn more about asthma management.

About AAFA

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA provides practical information and community-based services through its digital communities and national network of local chapters and educational support groups. Through its Kids With Food Allergies division, AAFA offers the most extensive online support community for families raising children with food allergies. AAFA also helps consumers identify products suitable for those with asthma and allergies through the **asthma & allergy friendly**® Certification Program. For more information, visit www.aafa.org.

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Media Contact:

Angel Waldron, Director of Communications

awaldron@aafa.org

202-974-1223