



Food Allergies Are Top Concern for Families As They Prepare for Back-to-School New Study Spotlights the Social, Emotional & Financial Impact of Managing Food Allergies

August 15, 2019 – Washington, DC – Today, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) released a report of findings from its “My Life With Food Allergy” study. As children and parents prepare for back-to-school, the report emphasizes the significant burden of food allergies on the social, emotional and financial well-being of patients and families and highlights the challenges school activities can cause for families managing food allergies.

“Food allergies are a top concern for many families year-round and especially during back-to-school season. It is becoming increasingly apparent how food allergies negatively impact the life of not only children and adults with allergies, but also their families and caregivers,” stated Kenneth Mendez, AAFA’s CEO and president. “School social activities, going out to restaurants, birthday parties and Halloween can be fun times for many. But for families living with food allergies, those events can feel like minefields. They must be constantly vigilant to keep their loved ones safe. It is critical for us to utilize our new findings to develop the necessary resources for individuals and families so they can feel more confident and supported.”

The public health issue of food allergy among children in the United States continues to grow and is an area of active research. This report succinctly captures the daily burden and challenges of food allergy and is available on the AAFA website, located here aafa.org/foodallergy-life

Key Findings include:

- The constant fear of accidental exposure to food allergens causes heightened stress and can lead to anxiety, depression and social isolation – with 60% of parent respondents reporting that managing food allergies has had a substantial impact on their mental and emotional health.
- More than 50% of parents report they missed important school functions/life events or altered plans because of their child’s food allergy.



- The direct and indirect costs of living with food allergy—which includes the costs of identifying and buying specialty foods, medical care and treatment, and lost wages due to food allergy-related time off or other career choices—can greatly impact family finances. Nearly half (44%) of parents say they or their spouse have had to make a career choice (such as quitting or changing jobs) in order to care for their child with food allergy and the change in employment has resulted in a negative impact on 84% of those families' finances. These parents report taking on additional credit card debt, needing to seek social assistance and declaring bankruptcy.

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 empowers patients and their families by providing practical information and community-based services. Through its Kids With Food Allergies division, AAFA offers the most extensive online support community for families raising children with food allergies. For more information, visit www.aafa.org and www.kidswithfoodallergies.org.

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