



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

Representative John J. Mahoney, House Chair
The Joint Committee on Public Health
State House, Room 130
Boston, MA, 02133

Senator Joanne M. Comerford, Senate Chair
The Joint Committee on Public Health
State House, Room 70-C
Boston, MA, 02133

Members of the Joint Committee on Public Health

RE: S.1276/H.1850 An Act ensuring safe patient access to emergency care

September 18, 2019

Dear Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee,

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is writing in support of S.1276/H.1850. Asthma is a chronic disease that causes airways to become inflamed making it difficult to breathe. An asthma episode can quickly become severe and require immediate emergency treatment. There is no cure for asthma and there are approximately ten asthma-related deaths every day in the U.S.

Access to adequate emergency care is especially critical in Massachusetts where the asthma prevalence exceeds the national average.¹ Emergency department visits and mortality rates are also high according to AAFA's 2019 Asthma Capitals Report,² which ranks most challenging cities to live with asthma based on prevalence, emergency department visits, and mortality. Springfield, MA, the #1 Asthma Capital, has the second highest number of asthma-related emergency room visits and Boston, MA, the #8 Asthma Capital, has the third highest asthma mortality rate.

Most asthma-related deaths are preventable with proper management, housing improvements, better air quality, and, importantly, safe patient access to emergency care. One preventable death is one too many. AAFA therefore encourages the passage of S.1276/H.1850 to protect the lives of all Massachusetts residents living with asthma.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kenneth Mendez
President and Chief Executive Officer
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

¹ Asthma prevalence nationally is 8.4% for adults and 7.7% for children; Massachusetts is 11.5% and 15.8%, respectively. From: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Asthma Control Program.

² www.AsthmaCapitals.com