



County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors
70 West Hedding Street
East Wing, 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

January 27, 2020

Dear Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), I am writing in support of Santa Clara County's Subsidized Medication Pilot Program. This innovative program will make epinephrine auto-injectors, asthma inhalers, and insulin more affordable for residents of Santa Clara County. AAFA is the leading patient organization for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy patient group in the world. Like you, we believe that cost should not be a barrier to these crucial medications and devices.

For our community, epinephrine auto-injectors and asthma inhalers are of paramount concern. Over 32 million Americans, including over 5 million children, have food allergies.^{1,2} Exposure to a food allergen can lead to anaphylaxis, a serious medical reaction that can be fatal if untreated with emergency medicines like epinephrine auto-injectors. Meanwhile, the United States is home to more than 25 million individuals, including over five million children, who are living with asthma.³ Asthma causes approximately 3,600 deaths per year – and many of these deaths are entirely preventable⁴

For both asthma and food allergies, timely treatment of an attack or reaction is crucial. Unfortunately, the drugs needed for these responses – asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors – are sometimes out of reach. Making drugs accessible and affordable for our patient communities through a range of policy efforts at the state and federal levels has long been a major policy priority for AAFA.

It is deeply concerning that residents of Santa Clara County, like many families around the country, continue to face challenges in accessing asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors. AAFA believes that we need systemic changes – including broad solutions to soaring drug prices; prompt availability of generics; and comprehensive, affordable, insurance – to improve access to drugs for our community and for all Americans. In the meantime, we appreciate attention at all levels of government to meeting the needs of people with asthma and food allergies. No family

¹ Gupta RS, Warren CM, Smith BM, Jiang J, Blumenstock JA, Davis MM, Schleimer RP, Nadeau KC. Prevalence and Severity of Food Allergies Among US Adults. *J*

² Gupta RS, Warren CM, Smith BM, Blumenstock JA, Jiang J, Davis MM, Nadeau KC. The Public Health Impact of Parent-Reported Childhood Food Allergies in the United States. *Pediatrics* 2018; 142(6):e20181235.

³ CDC National Center for Health Statistics, "Asthma." Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/asthma.htm>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "AsthmaStats: Asthma as the Underlying Cause of Death." Available at https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthma_stats/documents/AsthmStat_Mortality_2001-2016-H.pdf



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

should experience the preventable loss of a loved one due to gaps in access to these essential drugs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Mendez', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

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