



Press Release

Asthma Foundation Urges President Biden to Act As Asthma Deaths Rise

Intersection between health, climate, and equity magnifies need

Washington, D.C., March 31, 2022 – Today, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) requested President Biden to proclaim May as “National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.”

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month is a time to educate patients, family, friends, co-workers, and others about these diseases impacting more than 65 million Americans. AAFA believes that calling on President Biden to proclaim May “National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month” will raise awareness about asthma and allergies, help people understand the link between climate change and health, and support the Administration’s immediate priorities in climate, health care, racial equity, and the economy.

“Calling attention to allergies and asthma conveys the themes of President Biden’s priorities in a way that all Americans will understand. People feel their asthma and allergies getting worse from increased air pollution and ground-level ozone, wildfire smoke, and mold from extreme weather events,” says Kenneth Mendez, CEO and president of AAFA. “In terms of racial equity, Black Americans are three times more likely to die from asthma, five times more likely to be treated in an emergency room for asthma, and Black women have the highest rate of death from asthma when compared to any racial group. Asthma costs the US economy at least \$50 billion in healthcare costs alone and is one of the top reasons for missed school days among children.”

AAFA’s recently released Allergy Capitals Report named President Biden’s hometown, Scranton, Pennsylvania as the most challenging city in the U.S. for pollen allergies for the second year in a row. The report explains how seasonal allergies have worsened because of climate change. Growing seasons are longer and warmer, leading to higher pollen counts, a main factor causing seasonal allergies in millions of Americans. Allergies can also be a trigger for asthma, a chronic disease that is sometimes fatal. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 25 million Americans have asthma. Annual deaths from asthma increased from over 3,500 people in 2019 to over 4,100 people in 2020.

“I’m heartbroken to see that the CDC’s count of annual deaths from asthma rose to over 4,100 people,” says Melanie Carver, Chief Mission Officer of AAFA. “If we want to reverse this trend, we must all raise awareness and urgently advocate for policies that address climate change, improve access to health care, and remove structural barriers that interfere with health equity.”

- [AAFA’s Letter to President Biden](#)
- [AAFA’s 2022 Allergy Capitals™ Report](#)
- [AAFA’s Asthma Disparities Report](#)



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

Press Contact:

Kimberly Rafferty

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)

media@aafa.org

##

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 offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit <https://www.aafa.org/>.