



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAFA Asks Congress to Act on the Growing Asthma and Allergy Burden on Individuals and Communities

AAFA takes annual advocacy efforts to Capitol Hill with virtual rounds

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26, 2022 – Patient advocates and leadership from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) appeal to U.S. representatives and senators to act on the growing impact of asthma and allergies on communities across the nation, as well as the devastating toll of racial and ethnic disparities and climate change on health.

Each year, AAFA brings patient spokespeople and advocates from across the nation to Congress to help advance policies to save and improve the lives of the 65 million people in the U.S. affected by allergies and asthma. Normally dubbed a “fly-in” because advocates typically travel from around the country to Washington, D.C., this year’s meetings were held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, AAFA is asking Congress to support funding for key programs and legislation that continue to improve research, prevention, treatment and access to care to save lives and promote health equity.

Community advocates and members of AAFA’s leadership team – including staff, board members and regional chapter representatives – encourage congressional members to support four specific legislative and Fiscal Year 2023 funding priorities. These include:

- \$40 million appropriation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Asthma Control Program (NACP)
- The Elijah E. Cummings Family Asthma Act (H.R. 7055)
- \$110 million appropriation for the CDC Climate and Health Program
- The Medical Nutrition Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 3783/S. 2013)

Black Americans are still three times more likely to die from asthma and five times more likely to be treated in emergency rooms compared to white Americans. The difference in rates among racial groups is similar for food allergies. Black children are 7% more likely to have food allergies overall compared to white children. Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian and Asian children are 25% more likely to have food allergies. Black children with food allergies are also more likely to die from anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction, than white children with food allergies.

Climate change is a public health emergency. The United States is already experiencing increased levels of ozone and particulate air pollution; extreme weather patterns, such as heat and severe storms; increased wildfires; and longer and more intense allergy seasons. Every American’s health is at risk due to climate change, but some populations are more at risk than others. These populations include infants, children, seniors, people with chronic diseases like asthma and allergies, people who are pregnant, low-income communities, communities of color, and people with disabilities.



AAFA and its community coalition of patient advocates met with top legislators throughout the week of April 18, 2022. AAFA is also working closely with congressional members already leading the way on legislation designed to address the impact of structural and systemic racism to better protect people living with asthma and allergies. This series of virtual Capitol Hill meetings took place during National Minority Health Month and will serve as a kick-off to National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month in May.



“Asthma has a negative impact on school-aged children. I advocate for my kids and other children living with asthma. As a school nurse, I manage students with asthma in the school. My most significant worries for my kids and other children living with asthma are safe environment, school attendance/school performance, safe physical activities, self-advocacy, and their ability to identify their symptoms and asthma triggers.”

- Esther Uloma Igboerika, California



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“While my husband, Jordan, and I were aware of his asthma, we did not realize his condition could be fatal. Unfortunately, at the age of 30, it was for him. In only 5 minutes, Jordan’s severe attack took his life. In the aftermath of losing him, it’s been my mission to better understand the dangers associated with asthma for Black men like Jordan, and why outcomes for their survival differ so much from their white counterparts.”

- Valerie Vison, Minnesota



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As part of National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, AAFA is asking advocates to save this date on their calendars as part of its 31 Days of Action:

- May 16, 2022 – Advocacy Day: Ask your elected officials to support the Elijah E. Cummings Family Asthma Act and the Medical Nutrition Equity Act using a simple tool that AAFA provides.

To find out more about AAFA’s advocacy efforts during awareness month in May go to: [AAFA’s 31 Days of Action](#)

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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: www.aafa.org