



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative®



April 8, 2022

Dear Senator/Representative:

Our organizations write to thank you for your previous funding support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Asthma Control Program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and ask for your strong support again in FY 2023. **Specifically, we ask that you support a \$9.5 million increase in funding for CDC's National Asthma Control Program, bringing funding to \$40 million for FY23.**

Currently, 23 states, Houston, TX, and Puerto Rico receive critical funding from the National Asthma Control Program to support state and local efforts to reduce the burden of asthma. Our request for \$40 million in funding for the National Asthma Control Program would enable CDC to continue to fund these programs to combat the terrible human and economic burden caused by asthma. This increase in funding would also allow CDC to expand the Asthma Call-back Survey to more states, thereby facilitating the collection of critical asthma surveillance data necessary for effective policy planning and implementation.

Asthma remains a serious and costly health issue in our nation. It is estimated that 25.1 million Americans have asthma, of whom 5.1 million are children. Asthma is a leading cause of hospitalizations and school absences due to a chronic disease among children. It is responsible for \$50.3 billion annually in healthcare costs, \$3 billion in missed school and work days, and \$29 billion from mortality. Tragically, while most deaths caused by asthma can be prevented, this disease still claims the lives of several thousand individuals in the United States each year. In 2020, asthma took the lives of over 4,100 people.

While asthma impacts people of all ages across our nation, racial and ethnic disparities in the burden of asthma persist. Blacks and American Indian/Alaska Natives have the highest current asthma rates compared to other races and ethnicities, and Puerto Ricans living in the continental U.S. have the highest asthma rates of any racial or ethnic group. In 2018, Black Americans (10.9%) were 42 percent more likely than whites (7.7%) to have asthma. Black Americans are three times more likely to die from asthma than white Americans. Black individuals with asthma are also five times more likely to be treated for asthma in hospital emergency departments, which signals their asthma is not well-controlled.

The National Asthma Control Program is making a difference in improving disease outcomes. Since the inception of the National Asthma Control Program in 1999, death rates have decreased by 41 percent. While the number of people living with asthma has increased, research shows that people with asthma are better managing their disease. The number of people having asthma attacks decreased by 16 percent from 2001 to 2018, and there were 24 percent fewer hospitalizations due to asthma from 2003 to 2010. Through its Controlling Childhood Asthma, Reducing Emergencies (CCARE) initiative, CDC has set a goal of preventing half a million asthma related hospitalizations and emergency department visits among children in five years. To accomplish this and to improve health outcomes for all asthma patients, CDC has also developed and worked to raise awareness of EXHALE, a set of six key asthma control strategies. Funding for additional states would be an important step in making progress towards these goals.

Asthma is a complex, multifactorial disease that requires a comprehensive approach. Public health programs that reduce the burden of asthma must include surveillance, environmental measures to reduce exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollutants, awareness and self-management education and appropriate healthcare services. We know that when it comes to asthma management, an investment made today will save money tomorrow.

We ask for your leadership in ensuring that CDC's National Asthma Control Program maintains and builds upon its success by **supporting funding in FY23 of at least \$40 million.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allergy and Asthma Network
American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, Inc
Healthy Schools Network
Trust for America's Health