Historic Bill Will Help Over 60 Million People with Asthma and Allergies

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) applauds congressional passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and looks forward to further prioritizing access to affordable, quality healthcare for asthma and allergy patients.

Washington, D.C., Aug. 12, 2022 – Today, Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act. This bill makes significant investments to address the climate crisis and to improve access to healthcare; two areas that directly impact over 60 million people in the United States with allergies and asthma. There is a direct link between climate change, allergies, asthma, and health equity. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) applauds the inclusion of many provisions for which we have been advocating that will benefit people with asthma and allergies.

Communities across the nation are already experiencing the health impacts of climate change, including longer and more intense allergy seasons which can be a trigger for asthma. This bill includes a historic $369 billion investment to combat climate change and aims to lower greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by 40% from 2005 levels by 2030.

“In the United States, the burden of asthma falls disproportionately on Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous populations. These groups have disproportionately high rates of poor asthma outcomes, including hospitalizations and deaths,” says Kenneth Mendez, AAFA President and CEO. “And these are the same populations that confront higher exposure to air pollution worsened by climate change.”

AAFA welcomes the bill’s specific funding for communities disproportionately burdened by air pollution. The quality of the environment around us has a direct impact on our health and the health of future generations. AAFA is especially appreciative that Congress heeded our repeated requests to provide additional funding to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help address air pollution in and around schools—one of 19 public policy recommendations included in AAFA’s Asthma Disparities in America report.

The passage of this bill also represents a significant step to improve health care affordability for millions of Americans. AAFA is pleased that two of the provisions we have consistently supported throughout negotiations have been included: a $2,000 out-of-pocket cap for prescription drugs in Medicare Part D and a 3-year extension of enhanced advance premium tax credits (APTCs). The $2,000 out-of-pocket cap will help seniors and people with disabilities insured by Medicare to afford vital prescription medication. This is especially beneficial for those who depend on costly medications. The extension of APTCs will ensure that millions of Americans who do not have access to employer-sponsored health insurance or who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid will continue to benefit from subsidies to make Marketplace coverage more affordable.
Asthma is a chronic disease impacting 25 million people with 4,100 deaths annually in the United States. As of 2013, asthma’s economic costs were $82 billion per year, a number that is likely much higher now in 2022. We hope that policymakers will continue to address issues that remain unresolved for our community like patients’ out-of-pocket costs at the pharmacy counter, the Medicaid coverage gap, and the allowance of new fossil fuel projects. AAFA looks forward to continuing to work with Congress to reduce the burden of disease and improve access to care for people with asthma and allergies.

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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