



October 17, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education & Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education & Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education & Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education & Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

Our organizations write to thank you for your strong, bipartisan bicameral support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Asthma Control Program in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations bill. We respectfully request that as you reconcile the House and Senate versions of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 that the House's position of \$34 million be included in the final bill.

CDC recently announced that 22 states, Puerto Rico and the City of Houston will receive critical funding from the National Asthma Control Program to support efforts to reduce the burden of

asthma. Unfortunately, almost ten states, cities and other entities were approved but not funded for the next five-year cycle. This includes Hawaii, Mississippi Oregon and Pennsylvania, which had been previously funded. The House's appropriated amount of \$34 million for the National Asthma Control Program would ensure these states receive funding for the next cycle, to help combat the terrible human and economic burden caused by asthma.

Asthma remains a serious and costly health issue in our nation. It is estimated that 26.5 million Americans have asthma, of whom 6.1 million are children, representing 10 percent of our nation's youth. Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalizations for children under the age of 15 and is a leading cause of school absences due to a chronic disease. 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 3500 Americans each year.

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 5 percent from 2001 to 2016 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. Funding for additional states would be an important step in making progress towards this goal.

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.

Again, our organizations respectfully request that as you reconcile the House and Senate versions of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill for FY20 that the House's position of \$34 million be included in the final bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network
American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Asthma Educators
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Children's National Health System
Families USA
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Health Resources in Action
Healthy Schools Campaign
Healthy Schools Network
National Center for Healthy Housing
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)
Trust for America's Health