



# Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition

## SECURING A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA

Asthma is the single most common chronic condition among children in the United States. Approximately 6.13 million children under age 18 in the U.S. have asthma, with poor and minority children suffering a greater burden of the disease.<sup>1,2,3</sup> The poorest children have an asthma prevalence of 11.7%, compared to 6-7% among higher income children.<sup>4</sup>

Not only is pediatric asthma widespread, the economic burden is substantial. Researchers estimate that the annual cost burden of childhood asthma is \$5.92 billion annually in direct healthcare expenditures alone;<sup>5</sup> this cost is expected to rise to approximately \$7.9 billion in 2020.<sup>6</sup> Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 17, and is associated with increased emergency department visits.<sup>7,8</sup> With 49% of school-aged children missing school days, pediatric asthma is also one of the leading causes of school absenteeism, accounting for over 7.2 million missed days per year.<sup>9, 10</sup>

Evidence suggests that improving asthma management and reducing exposure to triggers among vulnerable populations could save as much as 25% of total asthma costs, and help millions of children lead healthy, active lives.<sup>11,12</sup> Unfortunately, most children do not have well-controlled asthma, and 54% of children with diagnosed asthma have experienced an attack within the previous 12 months.<sup>13</sup> Increasing the number of children that have their asthma appropriately managed and addressing the underlying factors that cause asthma attacks should be priorities for the public health community.

### CHILDHOOD ASTHMA LEADERSHIP COALITION MEMBERS

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America	Healthy Schools Campaign
Association of Asthma Educators	Healthy Schools Network, Inc.
Asthma and Allergy Network	Johns Hopkins Adherence Research Center
American Academy of Pediatrics	Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved	National Asthma Educator Certification Board
American Lung Association	National Association of School Nurses
Asthma Regional Council of New England	National Center for Healthy Housing
Children's Environmental Health Network	National Medical Association
Children's National Medical Center	Nemours
DC Asthma Coalition	Not One More Life
Families USA	Regional Asthma Management & Prevention
First Focus	School-Based Health Alliance
George Washington University	Trust for America's Health
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative	

August 2018

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[www.childhoodasthma.org](http://www.childhoodasthma.org)

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### COLLABORATING TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF KIDS WITH ASTHMA

In order to address the serious and pervasive problem of childhood asthma in the United States, in 2012 the Merck Childhood Asthma Network (MCAN) partnered with the Department of Health Policy at the George Washington University (GWU) to establish a new national multi-sector coalition to raise awareness and advance public policies to improve the health of children who suffer from asthma. In 2015, new funding was obtained through the Kresge Foundation, and in 2018, Families USA joined GWU to continue the work of the Coalition.

The Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition consists of leading advocates and experts in childhood asthma, public health, environmental health, poverty, housing, health care, and health care economics. Members come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including clinical researchers, physicians and other providers, advocacy organizations, and policy experts. By working together, the Coalition aims to accelerate prevention and improve the diagnosis, treatment, and long-term management of childhood asthma through targeted state and federal efforts. The Coalition also works to address barriers that prevent children from accessing the health care services they need to control and manage asthma.

### THE CHILDHOOD ASTHMA LEADERSHIP COALITION'S POLICY GOALS

Collaboration and leadership on childhood asthma is especially important at this critical time in Washington when policymakers are making important decisions about the future of federal investments in our nation's public health and health coverage systems. By establishing a unified and informed voice using credible experts, the Coalition sets a clear vision for policy solutions which relies on evidence-based research to improve health outcomes for children with asthma. The Coalition's leading policy goals include:

- Ensuring the availability of stable health insurance for children with asthma;
- Creating access to asthma services for disadvantaged populations by advancing Medicaid policies for reimbursement of community-based asthma services (including, but not limited to, home and school-based asthma management);
- Reducing asthma disparities by "braiding across disciplines" and fostering cross-sector partnerships and collaborations between the many sectors that are important to asthma policy;
- Identifying new opportunities to improve asthma care that arise from health reform;
- Improving community health by advancing programs and policies that ensure that the places where people live, work, and learn are supportive of good health. New this

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funding cycle, CALC will actively work to improve population health in Washington, DC, the community in which the coalition is based.

The Coalition strives to achieve these goals by examining the issues surrounding childhood asthma, identifying best practices, raising awareness through public education, and issuing policy recommendations.

### THE BOTTOM LINE: CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA DESERVE A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Childhood asthma is a treatable and manageable disease. Coordinated federal engagement on asthma-related research and policy has the potential not only to save lives but also to spur the creation of cost-effective policies. Together we can work to ensure that the millions of children with asthma in the United States are able to grow up to become healthy and productive adults.

Resources from the Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition are available at [www.childhoodasthma.org](http://www.childhoodasthma.org).





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