

Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition

July 26, 2012

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
451 7th St. SW
Washington, DC 20410

The Honorable Steven Chu, Ph.D
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Education
Lyndon Baines Johnson Building
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Honorable Inez Moore Tenenbaum
Chairman
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Secretary Sebelius, Secretary Donovan, Secretary Chu, Secretary Duncan, Administrator Jackson, and Chairman Tenenbaum:

On behalf of the Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition, a new multi-sector coalition dedicated to raising awareness and improving public policy to reduce the burdens of childhood asthma, we are writing to thank you for your leadership in prioritizing pediatric asthma through your participation in the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children. The *Coordinated Federal Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Asthma Disparities* released in May 2012 holds tremendous promise.

Our organizations have a long history of working on essential issues affecting children with asthma. We recently joined together to form the Childhood Asthma Leadership Coalition with the goal of working collaboratively to accelerate prevention and early interventions to reduce asthma risks by improving symptom prevention, diagnosis, treatment, long-term case management, and improving home, community, and school-based interventions with federal policy change and targeted state efforts. We are grateful for this federal focus on childhood asthma disparities and are hopeful that an Action Plan that prioritizes access to treatments, reduced environmental exposures and early interventions where children live, learn, and play will make a significant difference in the health and learning of children who suffer with asthma, their families, their housing, and their child care centers and schools.

Our organizations, however, are troubled that the Action Plan comes at the same time the Administration has proposed drastic cuts or elimination of critical programs at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that work to reduce asthma's burden. For example: for two years, the Administration has proposed to eliminate CDC's National Asthma Control Program – which would have devastating consequences to people living with asthma in the 34 states, DC and Puerto Rico which receive funding under this

program. EPA recently zeroed out funding for its *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* program which has significant staff expertise and school stakeholders addressing school environments.

As you are aware, asthma is one of the most prevalent chronic conditions among children in the United States and a leading cause of missed school days. According to the CDC, children aged 0–17 years had higher asthma prevalence (9.5%) than adults aged 18 and over (7.7%). Children experience twice as many health care encounters for asthma as compared with adults. Asthma prevalence was higher for low-income children including African American children and Hispanic children of Puerto Rican descent. These statistics underscore the importance of the Task Force’s work and the timeliness of the Action Plan.

We urge you to move quickly to develop and implement policy solutions to address racial and ethnic asthma disparities and improve asthma outcomes for all children. 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.

We are grateful for your leadership on the President’s Task Force and look forward to its continued progress. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to further develop and implement this plan and any other proposals to improve the health and well-being of children with asthma. If you have any questions or would like to contact the Coalition, please call Lisa Shapiro at 202-657-0670.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology (AAAAI)
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology (ACAAI)
American Lung Association
Association of Asthma Educators
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Children’s Hospitals Association
First Focus
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology
Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc.
MomsRising
Healthy Schools Network, Inc.
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention Initiative
Trust for America’s Health