



April 30, 2015

The Honorable Kristin Gillibrand
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for the Family Asthma Act of 2015

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Booker:

On behalf of 60 million Americans with asthma and allergies, thank you for introducing the *Family Asthma Act of 2015*. Founded in 1953, the [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America \(AAFA\)](http://www.aafa.org) is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those with asthma and allergic diseases. We support this legislative proposal as an important way to advance that mission.

Asthma remains a significant public health problem in the United States. An estimated 25 million Americans have been diagnosed with asthma, and about 7 million are children. While asthma affects all populations, the burden of asthma falls disproportionately on the black and Hispanic/Latino—largely Puerto Rican—populations, and especially on minority children. Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15 and is a leading cause of school absences from chronic disease – accounting for over 14.4 million lost school days in 2011. Asthma costs our health and economic systems over \$56 billion annually in both healthcare costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity due to missed school and work days. Asthma claims the lives of more than 3,600 Americans each year.

Asthma is a complex disease that requires a comprehensive approach. 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. While the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) National Asthma Control Program has promoted integration and coordination of the public health response to asthma control, gaps remain in surveillance, data collection, coordination of information, research and awareness.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing the *Family Asthma Act of 2015*. If enacted, the Act will help to increase awareness by promoting activities to reduce the harmful effects of asthma and providing asthma education to the public, recommending additional research, encouraging states to create state level asthma plans and educate the public about asthma, and enhancing the collection of comparable data about asthma prevalence and severity.

Sincerely,

Cary Sennett, MD, PhD
President and CEO