



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

April 14, 2021

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), the leading patient organization advocating for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy patient group in the world, I am writing to request that you issue a proclamation declaring May “National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.”

In the United States, asthma presents significant burdens for approximately 25 million adults and children, as well as their families and caregivers. Annually, asthma costs our society an estimated \$82 billion in direct and indirect expenses, including medical costs related to 14.2 million office visits, 1.8 million emergency visits, and 440,000 hospitalizations. It is estimated that, from 2019 to 2038, the total cost of uncontrolled asthma could exceed \$963 billion in direct and indirect costs. Asthma is also the leading chronic disease among children and a top reason for missed school days.

As described in our recently released report, [\*AAFA's Asthma Disparities in America: A Roadmap to Reducing Burden on Racial and Ethnic Minorities\*](#), racial and ethnic disparities in the burden of asthma have long been established and supported by a large body of evidence. Black and Hispanic Americans have the highest rates of asthma. Black Americans are three times more likely to die from asthma than white Americans. Black patients are also five times more likely to be treated for asthma in hospital emergency rooms compared to white patients. These disparities are largely driven by interrelated and multidimensional social and structural determinants. Long-term systemic racism and discriminatory policies in housing, education, labor, health care, and the environment have created disadvantages for minority populations and exacerbated racial disparities in health.

We appreciate your commitment to addressing racial disparities in healthcare in the American Rescue Plan Act and in your recent FY 2022 discretionary budget request. Declaring May as National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month would represent your continued commitment to eradicating disparities in all disease areas while acknowledging a community that experiences some of the starkest health disparities in the United States.

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness week was first recognized in 1984 by President Regan at AAFA's request. We ask that you continue to recognize the importance of raising awareness for the millions of Americans and their families living with asthma and allergies and have included a draft proclamation to this letter.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez  
President & CEO  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America



**Attachment:**

By the President of the United States of America

*A Proclamation*

Expressing support for the designation of May as “National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month”.

Whereas 5,500,000 children in the United States, 7.5 percent, currently have asthma;

Whereas 24,800,000, or one in 13 people in the United States, have asthma and the numbers are increasing each year;

Whereas, in 2013, on average, children missed more than 13,800,000 days of school because of asthma;

Whereas asthma is the second most common noncommunicable disease among children;

Whereas 1,700,000 individuals per year visit emergency departments because of asthma’s effects;

Whereas the total economic cost of asthma in the United States was \$81,900,000,000 per year from 2008 to 2013;

Whereas fewer than half of people with asthma report being given an asthma action plan, which is key to the treatment of asthma attacks;

Whereas Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous individuals in the United States face the highest burden of asthma;

Whereas asthma is a manageable disease; and

Whereas May would be an appropriate month to designate as “Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month”:

Now, therefore, I, Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the Month of May 2021 as National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.