

April 11, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), I am writing to express deep concern about the recent firing of over 10,000 employees at Health and Human Services, including 2,400 staff from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Although these numbers represent an 18 percent reduction of CDC's workforce overall, they have resulted in a 100% elimination of many critical public health programs including the **National Asthma Control Program (NACP)**.

As the leading patient organization advocating for people with asthma and allergies and the oldest asthma and allergy patient group in the world, we are alarmed by these staffing reductions and their impact on the NACP. Nearly 28 million people in the United States have asthma and about 10 people still die every day from the disease. Asthma also carries a steep economic cost. As of 2013, asthma cost the U.S. an estimated \$82 billion annually — a figure that has likely increased in the years since.¹

NACP provides critical support to states working to improve the quality of asthma treatment and management. Asthma-related death rates declined significantly after NACP's implementation, decreasing by more than 45% between 1999 and 2018. The program has also been cost saving: for every \$1 spent, the program saves an average of \$71 dollars.² By working with state health departments on community-based care models, the NACP has been highly effective in its aim to reduce the number of deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department (ED) visits.

¹ Nurmagambetov, T., Kuwahara, R., & Garbe, P. (2018). The Economic Burden of Asthma in the United States, 2008–2013. *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*, 15(3), 348–356.
<https://doi.org/10.1513/AnnalsATS.201703-259OC>

² CDC's National Asthma Control Program: An Investment in America's Health. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2013.

On April 1, 2025, the entire staff of the NACP was laid off, effectively eliminating this critical program. These cuts threaten essential services for the 28 million people with asthma in the United States. Eliminating the staff responsible for this program will leave state and local health departments without adequate support to address asthma. The cuts to NACP and other CDC staff also defy Congressional decisions to appropriate funds to these programs.

With the Administration's new focus on combatting chronic illness, including asthma and allergies, these cuts seem illogical and short sighted. Even President Trump's Executive Order establishing his "Making America Healthy Again" commission highlights the importance of addressing asthma and allergies, noting that "In 2022, an estimated 30 million children (40.7 percent) had at least one health condition, such as allergies, asthma, or an autoimmune disease."³ The Executive Order goes on to explain, "To fully address the growing health crisis in America, we must re-direct our national focus, in the public and private sectors, toward understanding and drastically lowering chronic disease rates and ending childhood chronic disease."⁴

By stripping the CDC's core scientists and policy experts in asthma, the reductions in workforce undermine the very goal identified by the President. It will be impossible to achieve the President's goal of ending childhood chronic disease without the expertise of the staff leading NACP. The misguided cuts to CDC generally and to NACP specifically threaten essential services for millions of people with asthma and allergies.

These cuts come as rates of asthma and allergic diseases continue to rise. The reductions in staff and funding for NACP will have long-term consequences, increasing healthcare costs and putting millions at risk. Losing CDC personnel dedicated to asthma means fewer experts working on asthma surveillance, public health initiatives, and air quality protections—leaving millions of Americans even more vulnerable. Asthma affects millions of Americans in every corner of the country. But without federal support and CDC leadership, more families will face preventable emergencies, higher medical bills, and worse health outcomes.

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/establishing-the-presidents-make-america-healthy-again-commission/>

⁴ *Id.*



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

AAFA urges Congress to prioritize the health of all Americans by reinstating NACP's staff and continuing support for this critical program. Additionally, AAFA calls on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, as key leaders in public health policy, to exercise your leadership in ensuring the health and lives of individuals with asthma and allergies are protected.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez
President and Chief Executive Officer
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America