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NATIONAL ASTHMA CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO FIGHT ASTHMA IN U.S.

*Partners with Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago to Reduce Asthma Rates
Chicago's Asthma Rates as High as Two in 10 Children*

CHICAGO – August 5, 2010 – As children with asthma head back to school this fall, the National Asthma Campaign Foundation (NAC) is partnering with Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) to deliver Fight Asthma Now (FAN), an asthma education program that teaches youth to control and manage their asthma.

NAC is the only independent education and outreach organization focused on improving asthma care in the United States by implementing strategies recommended by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP). Asthma is a "silent epidemic," affecting 9.1% of children nationwide and it is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control, compared with white children, black children have a 260% higher emergency department visit rate, a 250% higher hospitalization rate and a 500% higher death rate from asthma.

Many children and adults live with uncontrolled asthma and experience a diminished quality of life and increased health costs – as well as time away from work and school. Dr. Gary S. Rachelefsky, NAC president and professor, Allergy and Immunology, UCLA Geffen School of Medicine notes: "Too many people with asthma are needlessly suffering and carry greater risk for asthma-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. In many cases, asthma can be well-controlled with proper education and treatment and the FAN program provides children in Chicago with important information and skills."

A Winning Approach to Reducing Asthma, the #1 Chronic Disease in U.S. Children

"In big cities across the nation, asthma hospitalization rates among children can be more than double the national average," said Dr. Bechara Choucair, Chicago's Commissioner for Public Health. "Children living in cities need effective programs to raise awareness for and improve the care of their asthma."

"We developed FAN to reach today's diverse youth and teens," explained Joel Africk, president and chief executive officer, RHAMC. "FAN's validated, flexible program works with Chicago Public Schools and can be adapted easily to meet the needs of other urban school districts that want to make a measurable improvement in kids' asthma knowledge and ability to administer their medications properly." NAC's partnership with RHAMC on the Chicago FAN initiative is one example of NAC's plan to partner with local organizations and make a difference for people living with asthma.

"FAN has been an important educational tool in our Chicago Public Schools' Asthma Management Project," said Ken Papineau, director of coordinated school health for Chicago Public Schools. "Since the fall of 2008, FAN has reached more than 500 students in 14 schools with some of the highest asthma rates in the district. Our students have shown a 30% increase in knowledge and confidence when it comes to treating and managing their asthma."

"Programs like FAN help children take an active role in their own healthcare and help them prevent asthma from taking over the lives," said Syrennia McArthur Hanshaw, R.N., University of Chicago Charter School nurse, where students with asthma recently participated in FAN. "In the long run, asthma education saves lives and keeping kids healthy today will help them lead better lives as adults."

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“Given the disproportionate affects of asthma on African-Americans, it is critical that we prioritize this type of direct outreach to help children in communities of high need,” said Congressman Bobby Rush. “The partnership between NAC and RHAMC helps ensure that asthma education is reaching kids who may otherwise live with uncontrolled asthma and experience countless visits to their local emergency room for urgent care. The FAN program is a strong model for community-based asthma education that will literally help save lives.”

A National Campaign on Asthma

“We are proud to have created the only nonprofit organization with a mission focused on responding to the NHLBI’s call to action for a national asthma campaign,” notes Dr. Rachelefsky. “And we are delighted to partner with a lung health leader like the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago to improve the lives of children and families living with asthma, and hope to bring successful programs like FAN to people across the United States,” he said.

NAC’s goal is to bring asthma awareness and education to the forefront of the public health dialogue and make a difference through its nationwide outreach and education initiative, NAC seeks to:

- Improve the lives of people with asthma, empowering them and allowing them to live unburdened lives through practical and easy-to-understand educational programming;
- Decrease costly emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to asthma;
- Partner with successful local organizations to support national progress through local outreach; and,
- Provide a centralized consortium of asthma education resources for patients, caregivers, healthcare practitioners and the public.

NAC’s activities are consistent with recommendations by a special NIH-sponsored Guidelines Implementation Panel that developed a roadmap to implementing national asthma guidelines; its goals are also consistent with *Healthy People 2010* goals for asthma. The NAEPP is an initiative of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI).

About National Asthma Campaign

The National Asthma Campaign (NAC) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in response to the NHLBI’s call to action for implementing national asthma treatment guidelines. NAC supports delivery of practical education and awareness initiatives about asthma to patients, caregivers, clinicians, employers and others in the United States. NAC is dedicated to making quality care available to all persons with asthma and reducing the burden of the disease by empowering people with asthma with the knowledge and skills to manage asthma. For more information, visit www.nationalasthmacampaign.org.

About RHAMC

Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) has been a local public health leader since 1906. Today the association fights lung disease and promotes healthy lungs by supporting research, advocacy, and education efforts on behalf of individuals and families affected by lung cancer, asthma, COPD (chronic bronchitis and emphysema) and other lung diseases. For more information, visit www.lungchicago.org.

Fight Asthma Now (FAN)

Fight Asthma Now is a free asthma education program for third through 12th grade students, developed by RHAMC. Through FAN, RHAMC asthma educators give children the skills and knowledge they need to identify and avoid triggers, manage their asthma episodes and control asthma for the long-term.

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