

Background and Summary

Family Asthma Act (S.1489 and H.R. 4166)

Findings

- more than 20 million Americans have asthma (6 million children & 16 million adults)
- 14 million school days & 11 million work days were missed in 2002 due to asthma
- asthma can be triggered by indoor allergens (dander) & outdoor allergens (pollen)
- 4,260 Americans died from asthma in 2002
- mortality from asthma is higher among African-Americans, women, and the elderly
- asthma accounts for nearly 500,000 hospitalizations each year
- the cost of asthma to the United States in 2004 was in excess of \$16 billion
- better asthma management could reverse the numbers of emergency department visits

Family Asthma Clinical and Environmental Health Research Grants

Allows the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award grants to entities serving a medically underserved population to conduct pilot projects to prevent and control asthma symptoms and to reduce asthma attacks in families containing individuals with asthma. These activities may include:

- researching and developing interventions to reduce the burden of asthma, improve disease control, and assist with the management of asthma
- collecting and analyzing data to determine the incidence, prevalence, and severity of asthma and associated risk factors
- using electronic medical records and telehealth to prevent acute asthma attacks
- facilitating communication of prevention information to individuals with asthma
- increase environmental understanding of factors that contribute to asthma
- expanding data collection of research into the genetic susceptibility to asthma

For fiscal years 2006 through 2010, \$10 million per year is authorized to award the grants. Eligible entities are: hospitals; community health centers; medical schools; nonprofit institutions; or that designated by the Secretary. Entities are encouraged to collaborate with one or more Head Start programs, utilize local school districts, and partner with community based organizations to identify children and families with asthma within the applicant's geographic area.

National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NHLBI)

In addition to other authorizations, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is authorized to be appropriated \$1 million for fiscal years 2006 through 2010 to develop a National Asthma Action Plan.

A report to Congress is required two years following enactment of the program and must include the following:

- recommendations for the future direction of asthma activities of the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program
- how the Federal Government can improve its response to asthma and how to expand its private-public partnerships with respect to asthma

Asthma-Related Activities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Secretary, acting through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), shall collaborate with states to conduct educational activities to deter the prevalence of asthma and disseminate information for managing asthma.

Specifically the Secretary shall:

- conduct local asthma surveillance activities to collect data on the prevalence and severity of asthma, effectiveness of public health interventions, and the quality of asthma management
- compile and publish annually data regarding the prevalence of children suffering with asthma, childhood mortality rate associated with asthma, and the adult mortality rate associated with asthma nationally

The CDC is authorized to be appropriated \$5 million for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010 for the purpose of carrying out this section.

Fellowship Training for Physicians to Provide Primary Care for Asthma

The Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shall establish individual and institutional training grants for education and training of healthcare providers, including asthma specialists, researchers and educators on the role of environmental factors in the development and prevention of asthma and recurrent asthma attacks, as well as methods to reduce such factors. There is authorized \$2 million for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2010 for these fellowships.