

Impact of Allergic and Immunologic Diseases

The challenge of managing asthma and other allergic diseases in the United States is becoming more difficult:

Asthma

- Asthma strikes 22 million Americans, including 9 million children. Deaths due to asthma exceed 5,000 annually.
- More than 24 million work days and an estimated 13 million school days are missed annually due to asthma.
- Successful outpatient management of asthma by an allergist-immunologist can reduce emergency department visits, hospital admissions and asthma mortality.
- More than 70% of people with asthma also suffer from other allergic diseases, such as rhinitis and atopic dermatitis (eczema).

Other Allergic Diseases

- Allergic diseases are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the United States.
- Nearly 35 million Americans are affected by chronic sinusitis, which causes workers to miss an average of four days of work each year and accounts for more than 18 million physician office visits.
- The most common skin condition in children younger than 11 is allergic dermatitis (eczema; itchy rash). Prevalence has increased from 3% in the 1960s to more than 10% today.
- Hives affect 10 to 20 percent of the population at some time in their lives. About 50% continue to have symptoms for more than six months.

Why Are Allergists Important?

Studies have shown that patients under the care of an allergist have better outcomes at lower cost because of:

- Fewer emergency care visits
- Fewer hospitalizations
- Reduced lengths of hospital stays
- Fewer sick care office visits
- Fewer days missed from work or school
- Increased productivity in their work and personal lives
- Greater satisfaction with their care
- An improved quality of life

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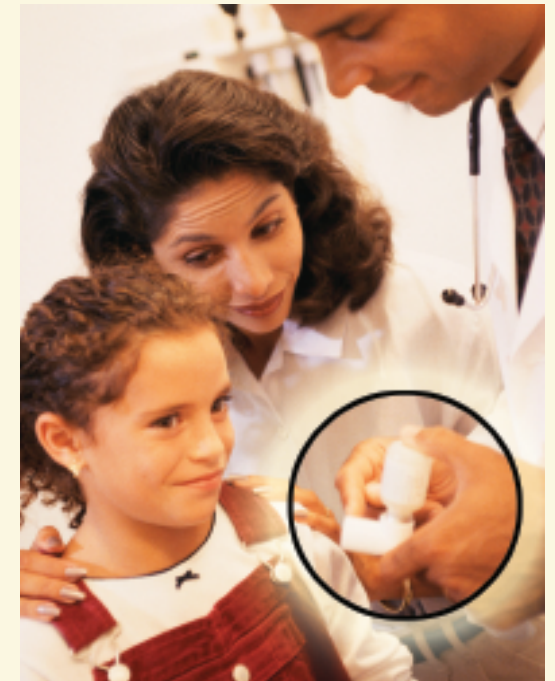
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AMERICA FACES ALLERGY/ASTHMA CRISIS



Demand for allergists will increase 35% by 2020

Supply of allergists expected to decline

Increased federal funding needed to avert Allergy/Asthma crisis

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Critical Shortage of Allergists

There is a growing shortage of allergists in the United States and it may affect you and your family. Demand for allergist/immunologists is projected to increase 35% by 2020, while supply is expected to decrease each year. **New and larger residency programs are needed in allergy and immunology to meet growing patient demand.**

Allergic and Immunologic Diseases Have Become More Prevalent

Allergic and Immunologic diseases have become more prevalent in the United States in recent years. They affect as many as 50 million people, or more than 20% of the population. The incidence of asthma alone has more than tripled over the past 25 years and currently affects more than 22 million Americans.

While the number of Americans with allergic diseases has grown dramatically, the number of allergists is projected to decline. Why? Because Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs have decreased due to limited federal funding. Moreover, there is a continuing and growing shortage of primary care and other physicians who treat allergic diseases.

Current production cannot keep up with demand. To cover attrition and keep up with growing demand, training programs must *increase* their production rate by 120 allergy/immunology physicians each year.

Proposed Solutions

Despite innovative approaches and funding mechanisms, policy changes are required at the national level to provide increased support for GME programs in allergy and immunology.



Action Required

A coordinated public-private initiative to fund additional GME positions, including allergy and immunology, deserves the urgent attention of federal policy makers. We at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology are eager to participate in efforts to find solutions for this pressing problem. It calls for immediate action.



TAKE ACTION TODAY:

Patients with allergic diseases deserve the highest quality of care. We urge you to write to your congressman and senators about this pressing issue that affects families and individuals living with asthma, allergies and other respiratory conditions. Ask them to introduce and support legislation to increase funding for Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs in allergy and immunology.

- Contact information for your congressman is available at: <http://clerk.house.gov/>
- Contact information for your senators is available at: <http://www.senate.gov/>