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RESPIRATORY HEALTH ASSOCIATION℠ of Metropolitan Chicago

National Asthma Epidemic
The status of Asthma in America

- Nine million children (12.7%) have asthma at some point in their lives. Of those, 70% currently have asthma according to 2005 data.[1]
- Asthma is the leading chronic childhood disease in the U.S.[1]
- Asthma accounts for 2.8% of all emergency room visits for children; in 2004 there were 750,000 pediatric emergency room visits. [1]
- In 2005, 5.2% of children had at least one asthma attack in the previous year (3.8 million children). Nearly two of every three children who currently have asthma had at least one attack in the past year.[1]
- Asthma-related visits to physician offices have increased sharply since the early 1990s from fewer than 40 visits per 1,000 children under age18 in 1990, to 89 visits per 1,000 in 2004. [1]
- African Americans are three to five times more likely to visit the emergency room, to be hospitalized, and to die because of asthma compared to whites. [1]
- In 2003, there were 4,099 deaths from asthma in the U.S.[2]
- The Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure. Even brief exposures can be harmful. Secondhand smoke exposure causes children who already have asthma to experience more frequent and more severe attacks. [3]
- Annually, there are 14 million school absences and 14.5 million missed work days due to asthma. [4]
- The total annual cost of asthma is estimated at $16.1 billion dollars.[5]

1 Akinbami LJ. The State of Childhood Asthma, United States, 1980-2005. Advance data from vital and health statistics; no 381, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2006.
2 Hoyert DL, Heron MP, Murphy SL, Kung HC. National Center for Health Statistics. CDC U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Deaths: Final Data for 2003, National Vital Statistics Reports, Volume 54, number 13, April 19, 2006.
3 The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. June 27, 2006. “Children Are Hurt by Secondhand Smoke Fact Sheet”, www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke.
4 Mannino DM, Homa DM, Akinbami LJ, Moorman JE, Gwynn C, Redd SC: Surveillance for asthma – United States, 1980-1999. MMWR March 29, 2002 51: 1-13.
5 National Institute of Health. .National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Chartbook. (2004). U.S. Department of

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