



**RESPIRATORY  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION<sup>SM</sup>**  
*of Metropolitan Chicago*

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**Statement of Brian Urbaszewski, Director of Environmental Health Programs,  
Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago  
on USEPA Global Warming Gas Endangerment Finding  
December 7, 2009**

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Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago applauds EPA's announcement yesterday, which recognizes that global warming affects our health. We are optimistic that programs and policies addressing climate change will reduce global warming and improve lung health in the process.

Studies demonstrate direct human health threats from the buildup of global warming gases in the atmosphere. Warmer weather and longer summer seasons will increase the risk and spread of infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, encephalitis and plague. And the predicted hotter summer weather itself is deadly; more heat waves will increase the deaths in vulnerable populations, including people with respiratory diseases.

EPA needs to move forward to implement programs to reduce global warming. Regulating the biggest sources of global warming gases – coal-fired power plants – and requiring cleaner energy sources such as wind, solar and energy efficiency will also bring significant benefits in reducing air pollution. This action will improve lung health quickly while addressing the multiple threats of global warming over the long term.

For Chicago in particular, this announcement means more action can be taken to make the air we breathe safer. Metropolitan Chicago residents are currently exposed to dangerous levels of ozone and PM2.5, which are primarily caused by coal-burning power plant emissions. As global warming gas emissions grow, reducing these pollutants will be hampered unless the EPA begins regulating and reducing such emissions. Without further action, metropolitan Chicago will also fail to meet a new sulfur dioxide air quality standard, which was proposed by EPA in November. Coal-fired power plants are the prime source of sulfur dioxide, a pollutant that causes breathing difficulties, triggers asthma attacks and increases hospital visits.

**Dedicated to Community Lung  
Health Since 1906**

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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 educational efforts on behalf of individuals and families affected by lung cancer, asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema (COPD) and other lung diseases. For more information, visit [www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org).