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New EPA smog standard proposal may not go far enough ~ Interview Opportunity ~

WHAT: Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago responds to EPA proposal issued today, urges strictest ozone (smog) standard be adopted.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW: Brian Urbaszewski—Director of Environmental Health Programs, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago. Contact at 1440 West Washington Boulevard, Chicago or by phone (312) 628-0245.

WHY: Today's proposal represents the EPA's reaction to strong criticism received after its 2008 ozone standards update. Critics argued that the 2008 standards of 75 parts per billion (ppb) should have been more strict.

STATEMENT: EPA's ozone standard proposal is an improvement over the agency's 2008 policy, but this new proposal may still fail to protect everyone's health with a reasonable margin of safety.

Scientific studies demonstrate adverse health effects at ozone levels lower than 70 ppb. Therefore, RHAMC strongly supports setting the federal standard at a level of 60 ppb. EPA is proposing the ozone standard be in the range of 60 to 70 ppb.

Due to successful implementation of the Clean Air Act, Chicago has made great strides towards cleaner air over the past 20 years. However, EPA has not yet determined whether the Chicago area meets the 75 ppb ozone standard issued in 2008 or how it would comply with an even tighter standard.

More information:

Ozone is a reactive gas that typically forms in high concentrations on hot, calm sunny days. Pollution from cars, trucks, power plants, factories and even household chemical products react in the presence of strong heat and sunlight to form ozone. Breathing ozone can irritate lung and throat tissue, leading to coughing, difficulty breathing and chest pain. It can lead to increased numbers of asthma attacks, as well as more emergency room visits and hospitalizations. It is also associated with approximately 4,000 premature deaths each year in the U.S.

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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, COPD (chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and other lung diseases. For more information, visit www.lungchicago.org.

Dedicated to
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Health Since 1906

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