

Dear:

As faculty and staff throughout the district can attest, asthma is an issue that the school community faces daily. It affects student and faculty absenteeism and productivity, and it demands an immense amount of time and attention of our school nurses and health services staff. It is one of the leading serious chronic childhood illnesses and is a leading medical cause of school absenteeism. Asthma demands a comprehensive education approach in our school district.

Asthma is a growing health problem nationwide. It is estimated that of the 27.6 million Americans who have been diagnosed with asthma, more than one-third of them (at least 8.9 million) are under the age of 18.<sup>1</sup> According to the American Lung Association of \_\_\_\_\_ (name), more than \_\_\_\_\_ (number) children in \_\_\_\_\_ (area) under 18 have asthma. Asthma is a chronic condition that can be life-threatening if not properly managed. *Management of asthma in children must involve a coordinated effort by medical providers, families, and schools. The \_\_\_\_\_ (district) schools' involvement in a community-wide asthma approach is critical.*

\_\_\_\_\_ [name of coalition] urges \_\_\_\_\_ (district) to require asthma education for students, faculty, and staff. While asthma education directly benefits students who must manage their disease on a daily basis, it also can result in a significant reduction of asthma crises in schools; reduce student absenteeism and improve student learning; improve district schools' response to asthma emergencies; and minimize potential liability.

Several community resources and programs are available to help \_\_\_\_\_ (district) initiate and maintain a comprehensive asthma education effort. We would like an opportunity to present specific programs and services to the district leaders and to discuss how a comprehensive asthma education program can be initiated, with the full support of the local health organizations. \_\_\_\_\_ (contact name/title) will call you within the next week to discuss this issue; you may reach her at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone). Thank you.

Sincerely,

<sup>1</sup> Akinbami LJ, Scheendorf, KC. Trends in childhood asthma: prevalence, health care utilization, and mortality. *Pediatrics*, 2002; 110(2):315-322.