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National President and  
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Dear Senator/Representative:

As the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress begins its work, the American Lung Association urges you to promote lung health and prevent lung disease. Your support for lung health, clean air protections and healthcare is vital in the fight against lung diseases, including lung cancer, asthma, pulmonary fibrosis and COPD.

There is an urgent need for action to improve lung health. Lung disease remains the third leading cause of death in the United States, and lung cancer is the leading cancer killer among women and men. According to the Lung Association's most recent "[State of the Air](#)" report, more than four in ten Americans live in places where the air they breathe can harm their health. Finally, the number of children without healthcare is increasing – jeopardizing their lung health.

Below is an overview of critical lung health priorities for which we ask your support to address these challenges.

**Protect and Increase Non-Defense Discretionary Spending.** Investment in public health programs saves lives, reduces health costs and strengthens our nation. The American Lung Association requests your help to ensure adequate funding for programs funded through annual appropriations by continuing the bipartisan practice of providing relief from sequestration budget cuts and by opposing any new efforts to cut these programs more deeply. We deeply appreciate the robust funding increases for the National Institutes of Health that have occurred in the last few years. However, we are very concerned that critical public health agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been cut dramatically and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has essentially been flat-funded for years.

The Lung Association calls your attention to the fact that more than 10 percent of CDC's budget is funded by the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund). Repealing or eliminating the Prevention Fund without a corresponding increase in the allocation for the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill would leave a funding gap for essential public health programs that would have dire consequences to our nation's health.

**Protect the Clean Air Act.** The American Lung Association has declared 2019 the Year of Air Pollution and Health, a year to celebrate the great progress made in reducing air pollution and highlight what still needs to be done to ensure healthy air

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for all, especially given the challenges to air quality posed by climate change. The Clean Air Act has driven dramatic improvements in air quality, and a rigorous, peer-reviewed analysis found that the benefits of the Clean Air Act's protections outweigh the costs 30 to 1. However, over the past two years EPA has worked to block, weaken or undermine numerous clean air protections – including lifesaving limits on mercury and air toxics; programs to reduce carbon pollution from cars and power plants and clean up methane from oil and gas operations. In addition, climate change threatens to undo progress toward healthy air, because warmer temperatures lead to more unhealthy ozone days and more dangerous wildfire smoke.

Congress must support full implementation and enforcement of the Clean Air Act to ensure that all Americans have healthy air to breathe, particularly those who are most vulnerable, including infants and children, pregnant women, seniors, people with asthma and other lung diseases, people with cardiovascular disease, and people living in poverty. Any attempts to block, weaken or delay the Clean Air Act or its life-saving standards must be rejected.

**Protect Health from Climate Change.** Addressing climate change is a public health imperative, but also a public health opportunity. Congress must work proactively toward legislation that dramatically reduces carbon, methane and other greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Climate legislation should also seek to maximize benefits to human health by ensuring reductions of other dangerous pollutants at the same time, especially in communities that experience disproportionate health burdens from nearby power plants and other polluting sources. Furthermore, Congress must reject any attempts to block, weaken or suspend Clean Air Act protections and authority as part of legislation to address climate change. The Clean Air Act ensures that EPA can address the pollution that causes climate change from many sectors, and this authority must remain fully in place in any climate legislation.

We also call on you to help communities prepare and adapt to the local climate and health impacts they are already experiencing, including by supporting CDC's work in this area.

**Protect the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.** In 2009, on a strong bipartisan basis, Congress passed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. This law tasked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with protecting the public from the proven dangers of tobacco use, including death from lung disease, cancer and heart disease, based on what is appropriate for the protection of the public health. Tobacco kills approximately 480,000 Americans each year and costs the nation upwards of \$332 billion annually in lost productivity and healthcare costs. In order to protect our nation's children and our nation's health, all tobacco products must be overseen by FDA. Following a 78 percent increase in e-cigarette use among high school students, last fall the federal government declared e-cigarette use among youth to be an epidemic. Cigar use by high school boys is also at dangerous levels and in some states, is higher than cigarette use.

The American Lung Association urges you to oppose any efforts to weaken FDA's authority over cigars, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products and instead support FDA's efforts to protect the next generation of America's youth from tobacco products.



**Strengthen and Protect the Affordable Care Act.**

Americans with lung disease need quality and affordable healthcare. In March 2017, the Lung Association and dozens of other patient advocacy organizations committed to a [set of healthcare principles](#). These principles state that any changes to the healthcare system must achieve healthcare that is affordable, accessible and adequate for patients. We encourage this Congress to work towards improvements to ensure access to treatments and care for Americans with lung disease, including those enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare. The Lung Association also recognizes that preventive services are at the heart of improving America's health and ultimately reducing healthcare costs.

**Ensure Medicare Patients Have Proper Oxygen Equipment and Services**

Millions of Medicare Americans have medical conditions including chronic lung diseases such as COPD and pulmonary fibrosis. Many will require supplemental oxygen as their disease progresses. Unfortunately, the current Medicare oxygen system does not meet the medical or quality of life needs of patients, and new policies are needed to ensure patients have access to life-sustaining oxygen.

**Defend Science and Oppose the Elimination of Federal Safeguards**

Congress must reject any legislation that would impose additional burdens to federal agencies setting public health safeguards, including undermining the use of peer-reviewed science. Under the guise of regulatory "reform," previous Congresses as well as the Trump administration have proposed policies that would make it harder to identify and protect the health of Americans from the dangers of unhealthy air and tobacco. Current law already requires that federal rules go through extensive review, analysis and public comment before they are finalized, and that tobacco and air pollution protections be based on sound science.

Thank you in advance for your support. As the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research, the American Lung Association urges your support for our lung health agenda in order to reduce the enormous burden of lung disease in the U.S.

Sincerely,



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