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October 10, 2013

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the American Lung Association, I write to express our grave concern about the continued shutdown of the federal government and its growing impact on lung health. The American Lung Association urges Congress to pass legislation to re-open the federal government that is free of any legislative riders. In order to fully protect the health and safety of the public, the entire government must be reopened. A piecemeal agency-by-agency approach will not protect public health.

As a result of the continued shutdown, our nation's lung health is increasingly in danger:

- **Finding new cures and treatments for lung cancer, COPD and asthma have been halted.** 70 percent of staff at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have been forced to stop their lifesaving work. According to NIH Director Francis Collins, each week the government is shut down, 200 people are turned away from the NIH clinical research center – which is often the last hope for people with rare and deadly diseases.
- **Big polluters are going unchecked.** There are no air pollution cops on the beat to help the states enforce clean air laws; air quality monitors are missing federal lab reviews; pollution control equipment may be put on hold or shut off, and emissions test data cannot be reviewed. As the shutdown continues, delayed federal grant funds could force state air agency staff furloughs, further weakening protections from pollution that makes people sick and cuts lives short.
- **Deadly outbreaks of the flu are not being tracked.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was forced to shut down influenza surveillance – this lifesaving operation – when the federal government closed. Each year in the U.S., influenza and its related complications result in an estimated 226,000 hospitalizations and anywhere from 3,000 to 49,000 deaths. If a flu epidemic were to occur during the shutdown, it could go undetected.

Lung disease is America's number three killer and is responsible for one in every six deaths, and tobacco use is responsible for one in every five deaths. Each year, close to 400,000 Americans die of lung disease, including COPD which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. More than 33 million Americans suffer from a chronic lung disease (including COPD), and it costs the economy an estimated \$129 billion each year. Close to 400,000 Americans are living with lung cancer, with more than 228,000 new cases and 160,000 deaths from it in 2013.

Lives are at risk the longer this shutdown continues. On behalf of the millions of Americans with lung disease, I urge you to pass legislation to re-open the federal government that is free of any legislative riders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Harold Wimmer
National President and CEO