

Testimony of Janice Nolen, American Lung Association to
US EPA OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROTECTION (OCHP)
FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 11, 2018

Thank you for this opportunity to share the concerns of the American Lung Association for the continued protection of children's health through the crucial work of the EPA Office of Children's Health Protection. My name is Janice Nolen and I am the National Assistant Vice President for Policy for the Lung Association.

We at the American Lung Association seek to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. Both of those strategies—improving health and preventing disease—begin at the earliest stages of our lives. As you know well, roughly 80 percent of our lungs develop after we are born and continue to develop until some of us are in our early twenties. The air they breathe indoors and outdoors not only can affect their immediate health but can cause lasting impacts. Even before they are born, the chemicals and pollutants that their mothers inhale can shape them at birth, as we are learning from studies examining the effect of widespread outdoor air pollutants. As Dr. Birnbaum noted, research has shown repeatedly that growing up exposed to unhealthy air in their neighborhoods can impact the function of their lungs which can affect their health for the rest of their lives—and that cleaner air can reduce that problem. In addition, roughly 6.1 million children in the US have asthma and are particularly vulnerable to the assault of unhealthy air indoors and out.

Because children are so vulnerable to the impacts of their environment, we at the Lung Association want to voice our support for the Office of Children's Health Protection. For more than twenty years—as long as a child's lungs take to fully develop—this Office has kept its focus on those millions of infants and children who desperately need protection from the widespread environmental threats they face.

The voice of the experts at this Office has become even more critical recently. We have seen this Administration take steps to roll back many safeguards in place for children. You've heard much today about specific toxics, but we're also concerned about efforts to allow incredibly dirty diesel engines to be used in even greater numbers, which would spew more toxic carcinogens along the highways where children live, play and go to school. Under review at OMB now is a plan to weaken the rule that

required power plants to reduce their emissions of mercury and other toxic chemicals and gases. And the current proposal for the replacement for the Clean Power Plan will actually kill more people and send more children with asthma to the hospital—all while it does much less to help reduce the devastating impacts of climate change that these children face.

We at the American Lung Association support the Office in its work to protect the health of children from environmental harm. We are glad to see the memo from the Acting Administrator today, but words do not carry weight: actions do. We urge EPA to take steps to see that this office is fully staffed and fully charged to continue this vital work.