

Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma



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MOTHERS OF CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA CALL ON CONGRESS TO PROTECT LA CLEAN-AIR PROGRESS

Achievements of the LA Clean Truck Program Highlight Urgency to Ensure Sustainability A Statement by LBACA Director Elisa Nicholas, MD

Oct 1, 2009 -- "A day for many mothers in Long Beach often begins with cleaning the layer of soot on the windowsill that has collected overnight. Common also to many mothers and families is exhaustion from having spent the night in the emergency room after their child suffered an asthma attack. The soot comes from diesel exhaust, a known carcinogen linked to numerous adverse health effects including reduced lung function growth and asthma in children, among others.

"A year ago the adoption of the Clean Trucks Program brought hope to many mothers that the start of a day would not involve worry about the harm continued exposure to diesel exhaust from old and polluting trucks was causing to their children's and community's health. The progress towards a healthier community has been more than we expected, and we are close to slashing harmful emissions by 80 percent by placing over 5,000 clean trucks on our streets.

"Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children with asthma and their families, applauds the groundbreaking progress of the Clean Trucks Program. We are concerned that the substantial benefit felt by many local mothers is in danger of being reversed. Critical components of the program are being stalled. A lawsuit on behalf of the American Trucking Association threatens to take away the significant success and potential introduced by the Clean Trucks Program. Local families simply cannot afford to lose thousands more missed school and work days on account of asthma attacks caused by exposure to unhealthy air filled with diesel exhaust.

"Our children especially deserve the security of knowing they can live, learn and play in an environment that promises a healthy future, one free from the millions of missed school and workdays nationwide and over 15,000 hospitalizations in California attributed to childhood asthma.

"Because the healthy growth of our children literally depends on reducing exposure to the toxic effects of diesel exhaust we support efforts to sustain the steady removal of polluting trucks from our neighborhoods. We call on Congress to ensure the LA Clean Truck Program can be fully implemented. Less polluting trucks on our streets means more days with the promise of healthy air for our children to breathe."

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The Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma (LBACA), started in 1999, is a partnership to improve the lives of children with asthma in the Long Beach community. LBACA employs a multi-faceted, community based approach addressing the systems, policies and social barriers to effective asthma care using evidence-based models. It examines and addresses factors at every level of influence including self-management, family and the home, provider capacity and expertise, school and after-school support, community awareness and action, environmental measures and conducive policies. The strategies adopted by the coalition for implementation support the development of an integrated community-wide asthma control and prevention system.