

PUBLIC POLICY POSITION

POSITION TITLE: Lung Health
DATE REVISED: June 29, 2024

POLICY PRINCIPLE ON LUNG HEALTH

The American Lung Association strongly supports measures to prevent lung disease, reduce the incidence and exacerbation of lung disease, improve the diagnosis and treatment of lung disease patients and increase their access to appropriate healthcare. Such measures should eliminate the disparity in lung disease morbidity and mortality prevalence for persons with lower income and communities of color. In addition, the American Lung Association supports developing and implementing a strong, comprehensive public health response to lung disease including public and professional education and outreach, research, legislation, regulation and litigation.

LUNG HEALTH

Healthcare Coverage and Access

The American Lung Association supports reforms to health insurance programs that ensure universal access to quality and affordable healthcare services, preventive care and appropriate specialty care for all consistent with national guidelines. The American Lung Association supports measures to reduce the burden of medical debt and other high-cost barriers that prevent access to care. The American Lung Association opposes discriminatory barriers to healthcare coverage.

Prescription Drug Coverage

The American Lung Association supports a fair, affordable prescription drug benefit for all.

Home Health Care/Durable Medical Equipment

The American Lung Association supports programs that provide care to chronically ill and home-based lung disease patients, including access to appropriate home oxygen equipment.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

The American Lung Association supports access and coverage for pulmonary rehabilitation services for lung disease patients.

Oxygen for Airline Passengers

The American Lung Association supports measures to ensure access to oxygen and respiratory equipment for airline passengers with lung disease.

Preemption

The American Lung Association opposes all forms of preemption of state and local public health authority.

LUNG CANCER

Diagnosis

The American Lung Association supports rigorous scientific research to improve the early detection of lung cancer to increase survival rates and reduce mortality.

Lung Cancer Screening Coverage

The American Lung Association supports access to low-dose CT screening for the recommended high-risk population. The American Lung Association supports research to develop additional risk-based criteria that allows for inclusion of other high-risk groups.

Improved Treatment

The American Lung Association supports measures to improve lung cancer treatment to increase survival rates and reduce mortality.

ASTHMA

Asthma and Children

All schools/school systems and childcare settings (including sports and recreation activities) should adopt and implement an evidence-based comprehensive plan for the management of asthma:

- Identify and track all students with a diagnosis of asthma.
- Obtain and ensure the use of an individualized Asthma Action Plan for all students with asthma.
- Establish standard emergency protocols.
- Educate all school personnel (especially health personnel, physical educators, and coaches) about asthma, including how to respond to an emergency.
- Provide a full-time registered nurse in every school, every day, all day.
- Ensure students have immediate access to quick-relief medications, including stock medications stored by the school for student use.
- Ensure that students whose asthma is not under good control are provided self-management education and case management.
- Establish standard emergency protocols.

School and Childcare Facility Environments

Schools and childcare facilities should be safe and healthful environments. The American Lung Association supports the adoption of protective indoor air quality guidelines for schools and childcare facilities. The American Lung Association supports policies that protect students and faculty from elevated levels of outdoor air pollution.

Asthma Public Health Programs

The American Lung Association supports funding the asthma public health program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that includes increased surveillance, improved health tracking and funding for state and local planning and programs and public health interventions in every state.

Population-based Asthma Screening

The American Lung Association does not support the use of public funds for population-based asthma screening as an effective means of identifying people with asthma. The

natural history of asthma is not well defined, and no simple screening test or examination currently exists.

Asthma Awareness

The American Lung Association supports awareness campaigns that focus on individuals. With limited resources, priority should be placed on increasing awareness of asthma symptoms and appropriate asthma management and on securing funding to ensure proper diagnosis and appropriate care.

NAEPP Guidelines

The American Lung Association supports the implementation of the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Asthma for all patients.

Asthma Educators Reimbursement

The American Lung Association supports appropriate reimbursement for asthma patient education services delivered by certified asthma educators.

Stock Asthma Medications

The American Lung Association supports measures providing schools the authority to stock quick-relief asthma medications for student use.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Diagnosis

The American Lung Association supports measures to ensure the appropriate use of spirometry as a diagnostic tool for lung disease.

Public Health Programs

The American Lung Association supports the creation and funding for COPD activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that includes the development of a national COPD action plan, increased surveillance and funding for state and local programs and public health interventions.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Eliminate Tuberculosis

The American Lung Association supports measures to achieve the goal of eliminating tuberculosis, including Multi-Drug Resistant TB and Extensive Drug Resistant TB.

Immunization

The American Lung Association supports measures to increase the rate of immunization, especially among children and high-risk individuals. The American Lung Association supports universal immunization for appropriate candidates including healthcare workers.

Respiratory Pandemics

The American Lung Association supports sustained and robust investments in public health infrastructure, including the development and testing of plans and funding to prepare for respiratory pandemics.

The American Lung Association recognizes that people living with chronic lung disease and smokers may be at greater risk for serious complications caused by respiratory viruses, including COVID-19 and influenza. The American Lung Association supports increasing investments in public health programs and research to increase awareness of these risks and to seek better treatments.

MARIJUANA AND LUNG HEALTH

Marijuana

- Since marijuana smoke harms lung health, the American Lung Association opposes the inhalation of smoke or aerosol of marijuana.
- The American Lung Association supports measures to require totally smokefree environments, including marijuana.

Medical Marijuana

- Medical marijuana should be subjected to the same Food and Drug Administration standards of efficacy and safety as any pharmaceutical agent promoted for purposes of alleviating the symptoms of disease.
- The American Lung Association supports research into the health effects of marijuana use, including the risks and any potential benefits of medical marijuana use.