

**Subject: American Lung Association Comments on the Report of the NIEHS Review Panel on the Children's Environmental Health Centers (Children's Centers)**

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**From:** Matt Keener <mattkeener@sbcglobal.net>

**To:** "Thayer, Kristina (NIH/NIEHS) [E]" <thayer@niehs.nih.gov>

**Cc:** <mkeener@alac.org>, Colleen Callahan <ccllahan@oclung.org>

**Conversation:** American Lung Association Comments on the Report of the NIEHS Review Panel on the Children's Environmental Health Centers (Children's Centers)

Dear Dr. Thayer:

We are very aware of the excellent research conducted by several of the Children's Centers in California and I greatly respect the research studies the Centers' investigators are conducting on environmental links to asthma, autism and neurobehavioral problems.

We are responding to the Review Panel Report that evaluated the Children's Center program, and we would like to raise several areas of concern.

1. Asthma is a major childhood disease and the largest cause of school absences for any chronic disease among children. We encourage the NIEHS to continue to fund research that seeks to investigate the environmental links to asthma.
2. The Review Panel suggests major changes in the way the Centers operate and the types of research they conduct. We urge you to keep in place a program that funds researchers to continue conducting a variety of environmental health studies, including both laboratory work and important population-based studies that follow groups of children over time. For example, the air pollution and respiratory health effects epidemiologic studies published by the USC-based Center has been invaluable to our American Lung Association efforts in California to fight for cleaner air.
3. In addition to their scientific contributions, the nationwide group of Centers have conducted community-based research projects and also

translated research findings so that the public better understands their public health relevance. The outreach efforts have been especially useful to our organization. In training community members and health care professionals, the Lung Association has incorporated scientific research findings on asthma published by Centers at the University of Iowa (on endotoxins), University of Southern California (air pollution near freeways), and Johns Hopkins University (urban particulate pollution). We might add that we learned about these results through the community outreach and translation cores of the centers.

We urge you to continue funding the research of the Children's Centers, including their long-term population based studies following children over time. And we urge you to please recognize that community outreach, community-based interventions, and policy initiatives should be an integral part of each Center. We have relied on the California Centers for exactly that as our organization considers policy initiatives to protect public health.

Thank you for your consideration.

Submitted by:

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