



Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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**Testimony of
Evelyn Malendez
Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
In Support of Asthma Funding
Before the Appropriations Health and Hospitals Subcommittee
March 2, 2011**

My name is Evelyn Melendez, and I am a member of the Asthma Speakers Bureau and a member of CT Coalition for Environmental Justice. I am speaking in support of full funding for the Asthma Outreach and Education Program.

I have spoken to hundreds of Hartford residents in the last 8 months, since I was trained to speak as an asthma educator. I have spoken at PTOs, health fairs and other events. I speak about the signs and symptoms of asthma and the need to seek medical advice if those signs and symptoms appear. I also encourage people to identify their asthma triggers and reduce those triggers.

By referring people to medical providers and helping people reduce asthma triggers in their home, the Asthma Outreach and Education program is helping to avoid costly emergency room visits and hospitalizations, thus saving the state money. Let me give you some numbers

- **Between 2000 and 2004, the total yearly cost of emergency room visits for children diagnosed with asthma was over 3 million dollars. 55% of this cost was paid for by the public through Medicaid.**

- **Between 2000 and 2004, the total yearly cost of emergency room visits for adults diagnosed with was over 9 million dollars. 45% of this cost was paid for by the public through Medicaid.**

I am sure these costs have risen even more since 2004. Asthma continues to be a crises in urban areas where hospitalization and emergency room visits are 2 or 3 times the state average.

But most of all the Asthma Outreach and Education program is working to save lives and reduce unnecessary suffering. Nationally, 14 people die each day from asthma. We can reduce this number, with proper outreach, education and care. I am proud to be a part of the outreach and education that is needed.

I would like to add that I have observed a high level of interest and participation with my presentations, indicating that we are effective in reaching people with our message. Every where I present , people express their gratitude for the outreach efforts we are involved in.

Please support the full funding of the Asthma Outreach and Education Program