

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

May 7, 2024

Proclaiming World Asthma Day in the County of Los Angeles

Asthma is a long-term, inflammatory disease in which the airways of the lungs constrict, causing wheezing, breathlessness, tightness of the chest, and coughing. In Los Angeles County (County), roughly 1.2 million people are affected by asthma, with nearly 27,000 adults and 20,000 children being rushed to the County’s emergency rooms for treatment annually. Among children, asthma is a leading cause of hospitalizations, long-term illness, and school absenteeism. People with moderate to severe asthma, particularly if not well-controlled, may be at higher risk for COVID-19. The prevalence and severity of asthma are disproportionately higher among children as well as Black, Latino, and Hispanic populations.

World Asthma Day is an annual education and information campaign organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma. This year, World Asthma Day will be held on May 7, 2024, to raise awareness of asthma and provide comprehensive education to individuals grappling with asthma to effectively manage their condition and discern when medical intervention is warranted. On World Asthma Day, health care practitioners are urged to heighten their understanding of the persistent and preventable morbidity and mortality associated with asthma, while staying abreast of the latest evidence-based approaches for its management to provide patients with accurate information and optimal treatment

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strategies. In celebration of World Asthma Day 2024, the Global Initiative for Asthma has selected the theme of “Asthma Education Empowers.” Key educational themes include under- or inaccurate diagnosis, under-use of corticosteroid inhalers, over-reliance on short-acting beta2-antagonist inhalers, and poor recognition of patients requiring specialist assessment and further asthma management.

For over a decade, the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Asthma Coalition of Los Angeles County (ACLAC) have worked collaboratively to promote asthma awareness in the County. ACLAC is a broad-based coalition of experts from community-based organizations, advocacy groups, universities, government entities, school districts, environmental groups, health plans, hospitals, and clinics in the County. ACLAC seeks policy and systems change to help prevent, minimize, and manage the burden of asthma by increasing access to and improving the quality of health care; improving indoor air quality in homes and schools; and improving outdoor air quality. In addition, through each of these goals, ACLAC strives to address racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities related to asthma.

DPH and ACLAC count among their collaborative partners California Breathing, the California State Department of Public Health’s asthma initiative, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ACLAC and California Breathing are exploring a health equity partnership to address the asthma burden on Black communities, specifically children and families, in Los Angeles. California Breathing will provide feedback on ACLAC’s education sessions, integrating evidence-based tools for asthma self-management, and building evaluation milestones. Further, ACLAC plans to launch social media and community information campaigns to highlight the benefits of asthma management within its partner network.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim May 7, 2024, as World Asthma Day in Los Angeles County.
2. Direct the Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with the Department of Health Services, Department of Youth Development, and the Los Angeles County of Education, to launch an effort to encourage residents and interested groups to observe World Asthma Day on May 7, 2024, with

appropriate activities that promote the importance of asthma awareness, education, and speaking with their primary care provider or child's pediatrician about asthma management, including the proper use of medications.

3. Direct DPH, in consultation with California Breathing and the Asthma Coalition of Los Angeles County, to develop a plan of action for addressing and reducing asthma burden in the County, with a focus on communities most disparately impacted by asthma as the priority population.
4. Direct DPH, in collaboration with the above-named Departments in Directive 2, to report back to the Board in writing in 90 days on its progress related to the activities above, as well as on available resources to address and reduce asthma burden in the County and support the work of coalition partners.

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