



Proclamation

Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways characterized by recurring episodes of wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Asthma currently affects more than 15 million Americans, including nearly 73,000 adults and 33,000 children in Hawai'i.

While an asthma episode can be instigated by exposure to allergens and irritants such as mold, dust mites and other insects, **smoking** and **secondhand smoke** remain major triggers of attacks. Recognition and understanding of this disease can lead to better asthma management for those affected, as well as those around them in the home, workplace or school. There are actions an individual can take to have asthma diagnosed, treated and controlled.

Managing this disease costs our state's economy nearly \$40 million per year. More than 7,200 Hawai'i residents are rushed to the emergency room each year due to asthma attacks. Infants and children under the age of four comprise the majority of these hospital visits, and asthma is one of the leading causes of missed work and school days nationwide. The asthma mortality rate in Hawai'i remains above the national average, with disparities continuing to persist, most notably among Native Hawaiians, young children, female adults and individuals residing in rural areas.

In 1999, the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health designated May as *National Asthma Awareness Month* in order to increase public awareness of this complicated disease. Locally, the Hawai'i Asthma Initiative and the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i are partnering to improve the quality of life for those suffering from asthma by launching a smoke-free homes initiative this summer to encourage Hawai'i citizens to reduce tobacco use on their property. These two groups will showcase the importance of a smoke-free environment to those affected by asthma by observing *Smoke-Free Homes Day* on Mother's Day, May 13, of this year.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR., Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim **May 2007** as

ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

in Hawai'i, and urge our citizens to help reduce the incidence of asthma triggered by smoking and secondhand smoke by making their homes smoke-free.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this third day of May 2007.

Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i

James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i