



**To Members of the Kansas House of Representatives  
Health and Human Services Committee**

**Re: HB 2478**

**Presented by Judy Keller, Executive Director  
American Lung Association of Kansas**

**January 29, 2004**

Asthma is the leading serious chronic illness among children. There are approximately 37,000 youth (children under the age of 18) in Kansas who had an asthma attack in the past year.

Most children have mild to moderate problems, and their illness can be controlled by regular treatment at home or in the doctor's office. But for some children the illness is a life-threatening, terrifying problem, which causes frequent visits to the hospital emergency room. This can be more frightening to a child when the attack happens at school, away from home and parents.

Asthma accounts for 14 million lost school days annually in the United States. It is the leading cause of school absenteeism attributed to chronic conditions.

Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15 and it is the first-ranking chronic condition.

Asthma is a reversible obstructive lung disease, caused by an increased reaction of the airways to various stimuli. An asthma attack can be brought on by allergies, vigorous exertion, exposure to secondhand smoke or chemical fumes and many other triggers.

Because children spend more than six hours a day in school, it is important that they be assured of proper asthma management during this time away from home. Reducing exposure to asthma triggers and providing the opportunity for self-management will improve the health of students with asthma.

Students should know how to properly manage their asthma and should have direct, immediate access to their medication. It can save their lives. Easy access to and correct use of asthma medication also are necessary to avoid serious respiratory complications and improve the student's quality of life.

Thank you.