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May is Asthma Awareness Month

New Resources Available For Estimated Quarter Million Minnesotans With Asthma

Saint Paul, Minn. – (May 1, 2003) – The American Lung Association of Minnesota today announced two new resources for Minnesotans with asthma, a serious chronic respiratory disease that affects people of all ages. People can talk to a registered nurse or respiratory therapists about asthma issues by calling a new toll free number: 1-800-548-8252. The Minnesota Asthma Info Center for patients, families and health professionals is also now available online at www.alamn.org/InfoCenter.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), emergency room visits and hospitalizations due to asthma cost the state more that \$33 million per year. Aided by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the MDH recently released a five-year strategic plan to reduce asthma-related hospital visits and improve the lives of Minnesotans who live with asthma. The plan is available on the MDH web site: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/cdee/asthma/

While the annual financial burden of uncontrolled asthma in Minnesota is huge, the human cost can be even greater. “Several children die of asthma in Minnesota every year,” said Lyann Yates, manager of the Minnesota Asthma Coalition, a statewide group formed by the Lung Association and MDH to organize asthma information and resources. “It’s such an unnecessary tragedy, because while we can’t cure asthma, and we are not even sure what causes it, we can now control asthma very effectively.”

May 6 is World Asthma Day, and the month of May has been designated as Asthma Awareness Month. Events are scheduled at high schools, malls and clinics in Bloomington, St. Paul, Saint Cloud, Moorhead and other communities. The ALAMA also has summer camps for children with asthma; programs aimed at reducing asthma in urban and minority populations; and specialized asthma training for health providers. A new asthma fundraiser, Skate On The Wild Side, hopes to build on the popularity of the Minnesota Wild hockey team by offering fans an opportunity to skate on Xcel Center ice. For more information, call 1-800-LUNG USA or visit www.alamn.org.