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## PEDIATRICIANS PUT PROVEN TREATMENT STRATEGIES TO WORK IN BATTLE AGAINST ASTHMA, TOP CHRONIC DISEASE FOR CHILDREN

**WASHINGTON, D.C., October 19, 2009** – With chronic diseases on the rise in children, pediatricians are looking for solutions to improve care and outcomes for these often complex illnesses. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), with a grant from the Merck Childhood Asthma Network, Inc. (MCAN), today announced a new initiative that will allow pediatricians across the country to pilot a series of quality improvement programs to effectively address the top chronic disease affecting kids – childhood asthma.

Officials from the AAP and MCAN emphasized the extreme importance of the new program since, even with evidence-based treatment guidelines from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) in place, research shows that two out of three children with moderate or severe asthma do not receive adequate or recommended treatment for controlling asthma. The AAP's Comprehensive Asthma Program (CAP) aims to help pediatricians implement the NHLBI guidelines.

"Growing numbers of children are suffering from asthma. This initiative will advance the care of these children by helping providers use the latest techniques of care in the most efficient and effective manner," said AAP president Judith Palfrey, MD, FAAP.

The AAP will use CAP to educate chapters and pediatric practices across the country about the implementation of the latest guidelines, which stress four main components: diagnosing and assessing the severity of asthma to monitor whether asthma control is achieved and maintained; creating a partnership between the patient and the health care provider involved in asthma care; controlling environmental factors and associated conditions that affect asthma; and using proper medication. The two-part program includes:

- **Chapter Quality Network Asthma Pilot Project** – Chapters in four states with disproportionately high rates of asthma – Alabama, Maine, Ohio and Oregon – are working with nearly 60 practices to transform their asthma care model. The 18-month program will use a chronic care treatment model and quality improvement strategies to implement the guidelines and improve the percentage of patients with well controlled asthma.
- **Medical Home Chapter Champions Program on Asthma** – Receiving care within the context of a medical home – an approach that provides comprehensive care by facilitating partnerships with the patient, pediatrician, specialists and emergency services – has the potential to improve care for children with asthma. The AAP is currently recruiting Medical Home Chapter Champions from all 66 chapters, which represent 60,000 pediatricians, to promote and facilitate the dissemination of best practices related to the implementation of the NHLBI asthma guidelines within medical homes. The chapter champions will advocate for the implementation of quality asthma care within medical homes to other health care providers and to policy makers.

"Children with asthma and their families often need professional support from pediatricians to manage asthma, a complex, chronic disease," said Dr. Floyd Malveaux, Executive Director of MCAN and former Dean of the College of Medicine at Howard University. "The CAP program will help pediatricians across the nation adopt proven best practices and clinical standards that will result in better care and quality of

life for affected children and families. This is especially true for children living in medically underserved and impoverished communities where asthma rates are higher and ER visits and hospitalizations remain at excessive levels."

**About the American Academy of Pediatrics**

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical subspecialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

**About MCAN**

The Merck Childhood Asthma Network (MCAN) is a separately incorporated, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization established to address the complex and growing problem of pediatric asthma. MCAN is funded by the Merck Company Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck & Co., Inc. Led by Floyd Malveaux, MD, PhD, a nationally recognized expert in asthma and allergic diseases and former Dean of the Howard University College of Medicine, MCAN is specifically focused on enhancing access to quality asthma care and management for children in the United States. For more information, please visit [www.mcanonline.org](http://www.mcanonline.org).

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