



The Health of America Is At Risk

Asthma. Lung cancer. Tuberculosis. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. More than 35 million Americans suffer from these and over 70 other lung diseases, and they count on the American Lung Association for life-saving support. With lung disease death rates steadily rising while other diseases decline, our work is needed now more than ever. Unfortunately, that work is now in jeopardy.

Like other organizations across the U.S. and around the globe, the American Lung Association of the Atlantic Coast is experiencing the pinch of the economic downturn. We have continued to trim our already-tight budget. It has been difficult to maintain our effectiveness and deeper cuts will further endanger our mission and the health of those we're fighting for.

This economic crisis comes at a time when the urgency for our work has never been greater:

- Lung disease is the No. 3 killer in the United States, responsible for 1 in 6 deaths.
- Every 4 minutes, an American dies from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Asthma affects close to 22.9 million Americans and costs our country roughly \$19.7 billion in direct and indirect health care costs.
- There are 1.4 million children alive today in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina who are expected to become smokers and will be at risk for lung cancer, COPD and other devastating diseases.

We are fighting against the diseases and poisons that stand in the way of every American's ability to breathe clean air into healthy lungs. Last year alone, almost 12,000 children and adults in the Atlantic Coast region received information on lung health and lung disease. More than 6,400 children and adults participated in programs on topics such as managing asthma or smoking cessation. We have helped countless others through our fight for laws that create smoke-free public places and decrease the amount of pollutants in the air.

Our efforts have saved lives and reduced healthcare costs for more than a century, but without additional funding now, the American Lung Association might not be here to continue the fight.