Learn How To Make Your Home Asthma-Healthy With Newly Released Guidelines

(NAPSA)—One common asthma myth is that asthma triggers are found mostly outdoors. In fact, asthma triggers can be found everywhere—outdoors, at work and inside the home. Asthma affects over 20 million Americans and it is estimated that many Americans may spend 90 percent of their time indoors, therefore making indoor air quality extremely important for asthma patients, especially during the cold winter months.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), in collaboration with Merck, wants to dispel this myth with a new resource guide to help patients with asthma better control their indoor environments. The *Guide for Creating an Asthma-Healthy Home* offers a list of common indoor asthma triggers—from allergens to irritants—as well as useful, easy "tips" for reducing asthma triggers in every room of the house. Examples of tips include how to kill dust mites, waterproof your home and reduce exposure to irritants. The guide also provides tips on cleaning and maintaining an asthma-healthy home and information about building or remodeling a home by using asthma-healthy materials and fabrics.

Asthma triggers are not just found outdoors; indoor triggers can include dust, mold, and pet dander as well as chemicals found in cleaning products, potpourri, and air fresheners. In fact, the indoor environment may expose people to more asthma triggers than anywhere else. "Many asthma sufferers are unaware of how critical proper indoor air quality control is for the management of their disease," said AAFA spokesperson Mike Tringale. "This is why we have created a guide to educate patients and provide them with

simple steps that will help make their home asthma-healthy. By getting better control of their indoor environment, asthma patients can take an active role in helping their asthma get under control."

There are two main types of indoor asthma triggers, including:

• Allergens, such as animal dander, cockroaches, dust mites and mold, which can be found in common household furniture and materials.

• Irritants, which are particles that can pollute indoor air and irritate the airways in the lungs. They are commonly found in certain types of paints, varnishes, waxes, solvents, cleaning products and more.

The *Guide for Creating an Asthma-Healthy Home* contains easy-to-follow, room-by-room tips for creating an asthma-healthy home. Some key pointers include:

• Get rid of dust mites:

—Use dust mite-resistant mattresses and pillowcases and wash sheets once a week in 130-degree water to kill dust mites and their eggs

• Never eat in bed, replace mattresses every ten years and vacuum floors and wipe dust off furniture weekly

• Opt for blinds and shades rather than heavy drapes and curtains

• Wash your child's plush toys regularly. You can also freeze them for 24 hours to kill mites

• Waterproof your home to avoid mold/mildew:

—Fix leaky pipes

—Use a fan/vent when showering to keep air circulating and reducing moisture

—Use easy-to-clean flooring and avoid carpeting where moisture can get trapped and encourage mold

• Avoid irritants:

—Avoid scented products like candles, air fresheners and potpourri

—Avoid wood-burning fireplaces as well as kerosene heaters

—Learn about common volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can be in cleaning products, paints, solvents, varnishes, etc., so that you can better avoid them.

It's important for people to discuss their asthma symptoms with their doctor to achieve asthma control. People need to understand the myths versus facts about asthma. Get started by visiting **www.ASTHMyths.com**, where you can download a free brochure to help start a conversation with your doctor about asthma control. You will also find AAFA's *Guide for Creating an Asthma-Healthy Home,* which provides additional easy tips on making your home asthma-healthy so that you can have better control over indoor allergens and ultimately over asthma. Reducing the sources of triggers and exposure to triggers is called environmental control, and it is a cornerstone of modern asthma management.