Michael Blunt, 10, had his first asthma attack as an infant. The attack terrified his mother, Crystal, who had also suffered from asthma as a child. All three of her children have asthma. Michael’s condition is the most severe. Crystal says that Michael’s life was in danger on many occasions because of his asthma.

One year Michael was hospitalized more than a dozen times because he was unable to breathe. The severity of his condition caused him to be hospitalized for three to seven days each time.

Michael attends Penn Wynne Elementary School in Ardmore, PA. “He has missed a lot of school over the years,” says his mother, “but his teachers have been supportive so he was able to keep up with his schoolwork. It also helps that he is really smart.”

Now Michael takes three medications a day and uses an inhaler to try to prevent attacks. “I worry about the long-term effects of the steroids,” Crystal admits. “I hope that scientists can figure out why some people have asthma and find a way to stop it.”
Hope for the Future:

- Years of asthma research funded by the NIH and CDC have been translated into a unique project called the Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI). Environmentally safe homes are being provided for low-income families with an asthmatic child through a collaboration of academic, government, private and citizen organizations. The project is sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and will determine if limiting exposure to environmental triggers can reduce asthma-related hospitalizations.*

- Asthma is a complicated disease for which the root causes still are not known. Researchers are continually searching for and discovering ways to better prevent, diagnose and manage asthma.

SOURCE: *HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF URBAN HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT (WWW.HUD.GOV/OFFICES/LEAD/HHI/INDEX.CFM)

The Bottom Line:

The economic and social burdens of chronic diseases like asthma are growing in the U.S. Increased investment in research is needed now to solve the long-term problem of preventing and managing asthma and other respiratory-related illnesses.

Strong support for basic research

Even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic science research, which advances the frontiers of knowledge, is necessary and should be supported by the federal government.

SOURCE: “TAKING OUR PULSE: THE PARADE/RESEARCH!AMERICA POLL” CONDUCTED BY CHARLTON RESEARCH COMPANY, 2004

Estimated Number of Adults with Asthma in 2002

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also estimates that 6 million children under the age of 18 have asthma.

SOURCE: BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, CDC, 2002

U.S. 15,960,496

For additional information contact the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA; www.lungusa.org

OR Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics at 1-800-878-4403; www.aanma.org.