



MOBILE C.A.R.E. FOUNDATION

CHICAGOLAND'S ASTHMA VANS

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April 23, 2014

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To Whom It May Concern:

I write to you today in enthusiastic support of the Respiratory Health Association's efforts to ban smoking in CPD parks. Mobile C.A.R.E. Foundation, in its quest to serve the 88,000+ Chicago children with asthma, sees this ban as an important step toward raising the city's air quality, and limiting a clear risk to children's health.

Mobile C.A.R.E. Foundation operates two mobile medical clinics called Asthma Vans which travel to 40 Chicago schools, delivering no-cost asthma diagnosis, care, medication, and education to 1,100 children annually. It is estimated that our efforts save the local healthcare industry \$5.7 million dollars per year and we account for a 30% drop in school absenteeism among our patients.

The number one cause of asthma inflammation in children is environmental triggers, one of which is cigarette smoke. Aboard Asthma Vans, we constantly inform parents and caregivers about the dangers of smoking, but the child's environment is much larger than the home. Schools, restaurants, and other community buildings have rightly had smoking curtailed in the interest of better city health. We believe it is past time to extend that same logic to city parks, where upward of 1 in 4 Chicago children exhibit asthma symptoms. Though we readily acknowledge the right of individuals to make their own choices, we cannot allow those decisions to negatively impact the health of children, as smoking does in overwhelming studies.

When the American Lung Association awarded Cook County an F grade last year for air quality, the "State of the State" report mentioned that "children and teens can be more active when they are outdoors, so they may inhale more pollution." Thus, "children face greater risk of infection, coughing and bronchitis from air pollution." For many low-income children, parks are the only outdoor spaces available to them. Mobile C.A.R.E. Foundation is proud to join the Respiratory Health Association and its allies in calling for the elimination of this unnecessary pollutant in a public space, and we encourage all reasonable people to adopt a smoking ban for our parks.

Sincerely,

Tim Egan
Chief Executive Officer