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## **New Data Shows “Smart Growth” Can Cut 140 Premature Deaths and 105,000 Asthma Attacks and Respiratory Symptoms Each Year**

*\$1.66 Billion in Avoided Public Health Costs from Building Walkable Communities, Close to Work and School*

SACRAMENTO, CA – The American Lung Association in California released new data today showing significant public health benefits from pursuing a smart growth future for California. The American Lung Association data shows health benefits, including reduced asthma attacks and premature deaths linked to the Vision California “mixed growth” and “growing smart” scenarios in 2035 that include more compact, sustainable development patterns.

The California Air Resources Board is expected to adopt regional carbon pollution reduction targets on Sept. 23 in Sacramento to help drive regional and local action to build more sustainable communities. The targets are intended to encourage more walkable neighborhoods built closer to jobs, with better transportation options that reduce congestion and cut consumer costs.

“If doctors and other health experts designed our cities, they would look quite different than the sprawling communities we see today,” said Sonal R. Patel, M.D., American Lung Association in California Board Member and Director of White Memorial Pediatric Medical Groups Division of Allergy and Immunology in Los Angeles. “Cities would provide more healthy choices, more opportunities for walking and biking, better access to transit, less congestion, more housing close to workplaces and more parks for kids and families to enjoy.”

The analysis concludes that more sustainable community development and more diverse transportation options will clean the air, reduce pollution-related illness and death, and avoid significant health costs. Specifically, the analysis found that by 2035, less driving annually avoids:

- \$1.66 billion pollution-related health costs
- 140 premature deaths
- 260 heart attacks
- 215 acute bronchitis incidents
- 95 cases of chronic bronchitis
- 2,370 asthma attacks
- 101,960 other respiratory symptoms
- 205 respiratory ER trips and hospitalizations
- 16,550 lost work days
- 132,190 tons of criteria pollutants

(more)

These numbers are conservative and would be higher if they included the additional and significant benefits of increased physical activity from communities that encourage more walking and cycling.

“Most Californians spend countless hours in traffic, precious hours that could be spent with family and friends,” said Bonnie Holmes-Gen, Senior Policy Director of American Lung Association in California. “With strong regional pollution targets, Californians have an opportunity to chart a new, healthier future.”

The historic smart growth law, SB 375, requires the adoption of regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to encourage better land-use and transportation planning. Thoughtful strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled will provide both economic and air quality benefits by linking transportation investments with the planned construction of a range of housing options.

The American Lung Association in California supports the adoption of effective standards by CARB to implement AB 32, SB 375 and other clean energy and clean air policies. For more information, go to

[www.lungusa.org/associations/states/california](http://www.lungusa.org/associations/states/california).

### **Data and Methodology**

These health impacts were analyzed by TIAX LLC, under contract to American Lung Association in California, building on the smart growth scenarios and data compiled by Calthorpe Associates for the California High Speed Rail Authority in partnership with the California Strategic Growth Council. Vision California compares a “Business as Usual” scenario, which assumes a continuation of dispersed, auto-oriented development patterns, with “Mixed Growth” and “Growing Smart” scenarios, which assume more balance in the housing mix and greater transportation options. The “Growing Smart” scenario was developed before CARB proposed their targets, but reflects a compact development scenario that is slightly more progressive than the targets proposed by CARB for the major urban areas

### **About the American Lung Association**

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is “Fighting for Air” through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit [www.LungUSA.org](http://www.LungUSA.org).

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