

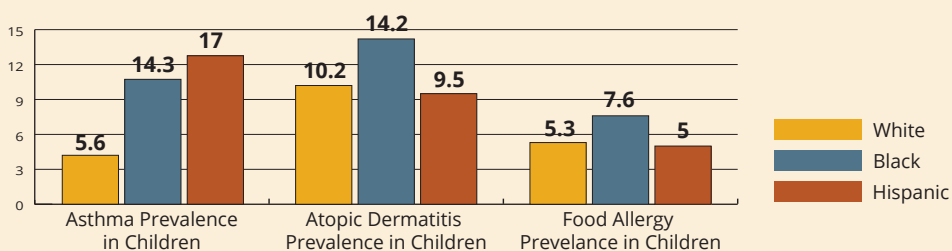
# Asthma, Atopic Dermatitis and Food Allergy Impacts in Communities that are Underserved



## Executive Summary

Every year, asthma, atopic dermatitis, and food allergies are **diagnosed in 89 million** Americans<sup>1-3</sup>, **cost \$112 billion** in healthcare spending<sup>2,4</sup>, and account for **2.8 million emergency room hospitalizations**<sup>2,4,5</sup>. **Black** and **Hispanic** people living in the US are **disproportionately impacted** by the negative health and financial outcomes of these diseases due to **inequities in socioeconomic status, health care access, and environmental justice**<sup>6-8</sup>. Black and Hispanic populations experience **greater difficulty filling prescriptions** due to cost<sup>9</sup>, **symptom severity**<sup>6-8</sup>, acute episodic hospitalizations<sup>6-8</sup>, and **death**<sup>6-8</sup> due to asthma, atopic dermatitis, and food allergies.

## Percentages of Children with Asthma, AD and Food Allergies



## ROOT CAUSES:

### SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

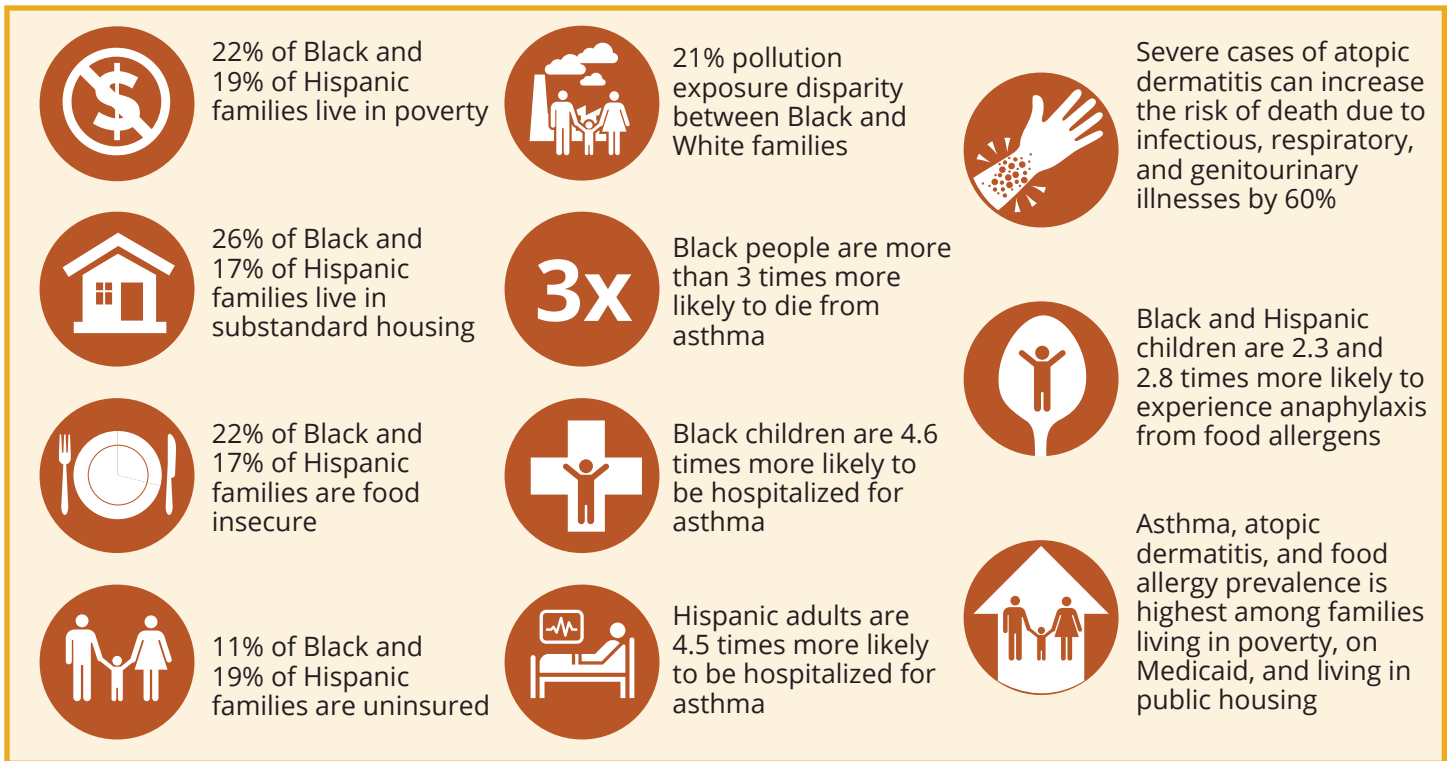
**Poverty** is associated with greater household **exposure** to asthma and atopic dermatitis **irritants** such as **polluted air and water, mold, and pests**<sup>10,11</sup>. In 2021, **22% of Black** and **18% of Hispanic** people living in the US **lived in poverty**<sup>12</sup>, with **26% of Black** and **21% of Hispanic** families living in **substandard** and extremely **low-income renter households**<sup>10</sup>. Poverty is also associated with food insecurity, with **22% of Black** and **17% of Hispanic** households experiencing **food insecurity** in 2020<sup>13</sup>. Given that Black and Hispanic people are **more likely to be allergic to staple foods such as peanuts, milk, and eggs**<sup>14</sup>, food insecurity makes avoiding common allergens difficult. Poverty is also connected to school resourcing, with Black and Hispanic children in **low-income** and **minority-majority schools** less likely to have **emergency epinephrine** and nurse training, leading to higher rates of **anaphylaxis, hospitalization, and death** due to **food allergies**<sup>7</sup>.

### HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Black and Hispanic people living in the US are more likely to struggle with financial access to health care. **Lack of insurance coverage**, which affects **11% of Black** and **19% of Hispanic** people, **hinders filling prescriptions** and **seeking** primary and specialty **care**<sup>12</sup>. Given that asthma, atopic dermatitis, and food allergies require consistent medical management, many **low-income and uninsured Hispanic and Black patients** experience **worse health outcomes** including **more frequent asthma attacks** and **skin infections** related to their atopic dermatitis<sup>1-8</sup>.

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Urban residency, **air pollution**, and climate change exacerbate symptoms. Roughly **20% of Black** and **30% of Hispanic** people **live in cities**<sup>15</sup>, and due to **segregation** and **redlining**, are more likely to live in **polluted areas**<sup>16</sup>. Pollution from vehicles, power plants, and industry contributes to ground level **ozone trapping pollen and tobacco smoke at breathing levels which exacerbate asthma and atopic dermatitis symptoms**<sup>6-8</sup>. Pollution also causes **urban heat sprawl** leading to respiratory difficulties during intense heat waves<sup>16</sup>. **Emergency room visitation** for **heat-related illnesses** increased by **67% for Black** and **63% of Hispanic** people in the decade<sup>16</sup>



- ## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:
- Increased Funding for Asthma, Atopic Dermatitis and Food Allergy Programs
  - Access to Affordable Healthcare
  - Environmental Justice
  - School-Based Programs
  - Research and Data Collection
  - Community Outreach and Engagement
  - Telehealth Services

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