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Poor Classroom Air Quality Increases Medicaid Costs

WICHITA, KS; January 17, 2012 — Poor classroom air quality may be a major factor driving children's respiratory illnesses which are costing Medicaid more than \$27.1 billion annually. Stan Brannan, President of Purifan, explained, "On January 14, 2012, CNN published a comprehensive news story written by David S. Martin titled 'Are schools making kids sick?', and at Purifan we believe strongly that this headline is true. We also believe poor classroom air quality is a major contributor to state Medicaid budgets." Brannan continued, "Medicaid budget directors might breathe easier when school-age children do too, because high levels of airborne particulates found in many classrooms are triggering a wide variety of costly health problems for many children, their parents and their parent's employers."

Purifan, Inc. is a Kansas-based company that manufactures a super quiet, ceiling mounted air purifier called a Purifan, which converts an ordinary ceiling fan into a powerful air purifier. Purifans have been used in more than 100 schools since 2001 to reduce high particulate levels by capturing airborne particles like mold, dust, decaying skin cells, paper dust, chalk dust and pet dander. Teachers in classrooms with Purifans installed have reported noticeable improvements in absenteeism, use of medications like inhalers and in tests scores. All of these outcomes have been proven in numerous other scientific studies around the world using a variety of air purifier technology.

One fully-equipped elementary school in Leavenworth, KS reported absenteeism in 2004 that averaged 18.23 sick days per child.. After Purifans were installed in 2005, the average days missed per student dropped to 6.99, a reduction of more than 11.2 missed school days per child. Teacher sick days were also cut in half and student inhaler use logged at the nurse's station declined by 70%. Parents missed fewer work days, spent less on health costs and the school's No Child Left Behind test results improved significantly. Teachers reported children used less medication, kept up with class work, were more alert in class and achieved much higher scores on standardized tests.

Rising Medicaid costs for children are a major budget problem in every state.

Purifan management believes that over the first five years, by aggressively and continuously filtering classroom air, the health costs savings for Medicaid alone could exceed 400% of the total cost. When all of the real out-of-pocket savings and costs are considered, including private insurance costs, teacher health cost impact, substitute teacher costs and the cost of parents missing work to care for sick children, the total savings of cleaner classroom air is projected by Purifan to be 25 times the cost.

Classroom air can contain airborne mold found in water damaged buildings, along with pet dander, dust, pollen, insect feces, bird feces and many other contaminants that are brought into the classroom on children's shoes, clothing, hair, and backpacks. Even brand new schools are reporting indoor air quality related health problems because new buildings constructed tighter, more energy-efficient building standards have resulted in higher concentrations of airborne particulates and more chemical smells from building materials. These airborne particulates and chemicals are known to trigger Asthma, allergies, and larger floating dust particles actually enhance the transmission of common classroom contagious illnesses including the seasonal colds and flu – costing Medicaid a projected \$27.1 Billion per year.

“The best way to reduce Medicaid spending for school-age children is to make students healthier, reducing their need for office visits, diagnostic testing, emergency room visits, hospitalizations and prescription medications that are common treatments for respiratory symptoms and illnesses triggered by poor classroom air quality. There is no more cost effective wellness program than to improve the quality of the air that they breathe in classrooms seven hours every day.” says Stanley Brannan, CEO of Purifan.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 10.9% of children have Asthma and 12.46% have allergies – representing the number one and three chronic illnesses among children respectively. These respiratory diseases are triggered by airborne particulates that are present in high concentrations in school classrooms. In fact, studies published by the EPA demonstrate that the air in classrooms may be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Over 40% of school nurses report that students and staff members are adversely impacted by indoor air pollutants.

“A Purifan air filtering system was installed in my classroom. WOW! I felt the difference almost immediately. The room smelled better. The room stayed cleaner. Not one child in my class needed to use an inhaler during school hours the entire year. Absences from respiratory illness were minimal. I was not sick all year!” says Glenna Weir, Pre-K Teacher at Blessed Sacrament School in Wichita, KS.

The link between high levels of airborne particulate matter and Asthma, allergies, and the enhanced transmission of airborne illnesses has been documented by numerous independent organizations. The National Academy of Sciences stated that

“allergic reactions account for the majority of absences from school and work. The four major indoor air allergens come from: dust mites, cats and dogs, cockroaches and mold.” In addition, an epidemiology study found that “dust particles effectively transfer disease-causing organisms. Airborne transmission occurs when droplets or dust particles carry the pathogen to the host and cause infection.” With regard to Asthma, an indoor air quality study cited a “statistically significant relationship between current asthma in secondary school pupils and school exposure to VOCs, viable bacteria (in air), viable molds (in air) and cat allergen in settled dust.”

“We believe it stands to reason that healthier students will not need to visit their doctor as often and will use less medicine. In addition to the children, Medicaid budgets benefit from cleaner classroom air.” says Stanley Brannan, CEO of Purifan, Inc. Brannan continued, “We have even been working with several Congressional leaders to introduce a bill called The Clean Classroom Air Medicaid Cost Reduction Act, which provides a small nationwide test to measure the real total Medicaid savings that might be achieved by providing Federal grants for schools to install and operate high-performance classroom air purification systems. School budgets are so tight they cannot afford to spend money on this unique student and teacher wellness program. Much of the substantial projected financial savings and payback actually goes others including Medicaid, private insurance companies, school families and their employers. That is another reason why the funding for cleaner classroom air probably has to come from the Federal government.”

Purifan air purifiers are MADE IN THE USA in Wichita, Kansas. Purifan, Inc. has been manufacturing high quality cost effective commercial grade air purifiers since 1998. The product holds 11 patents and more than 45,000 Purifans are in use in schools, restaurants, clubs, offices, and other commercial establishments. For more information contact Purifan at 800.686.6131 or www.purifan.com.

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