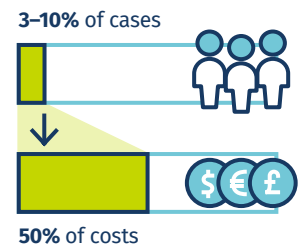


Call to action on severe asthma

Ensuring timely, equitable and comprehensive care

Severe asthma disproportionately contributes to high levels of illness and death, and drives health system costs. It is responsible for at least 50% of the total costs of asthma, despite only accounting for approximately 3–10% of cases.^{1,2} Especially when uncontrolled, severe asthma generates substantial costs due to lost productivity, premature death and high use of healthcare resources.¹ For example, a Canadian study estimated that the cost of managing severe asthma is ten times that of managing mild asthma.³ More than half of people living with severe asthma live with at least three other conditions,⁴ which further increases health system costs.



Experts continue to report five areas of unmet need in severe asthma:



Delays in diagnosis due to poor identification of people with severe asthma; and severe asthma not being seen as a distinct form of the condition



Lack of referral pathways and inadequate access to specialist care



Overreliance on oral corticosteroids, which can lead to short- and long-term adverse effects including pneumonia, cardiovascular disease and diabetes^{5,6}



Normalisation of **poor quality of life**



An **absence of comprehensive national strategies** for respiratory diseases, contributing to the growing burden of severe asthma

SUBOPTIMAL PATIENT PATHWAYS AND CARE

But there are clear opportunities for policy action to ensure people living with severe asthma have timely access to effective treatments in primary, secondary and community care settings.

We call on governments and policymakers to:

1 **implement existing clinical guidelines and quality standards⁷⁻⁹** for severe asthma care at the national level

2 drive the establishment of **clear referral criteria** and the implementation of **streamlined care pathways** so that patients reach specialists in a timely manner for the appropriate evaluation and optimisation of their care

3 enable healthcare professionals to promptly **identify people with suspected severe asthma⁹** and provide **coordination between primary and specialist care** by ensuring access to adequate training, decision-support tools and knowledge-sharing platforms

4 collaborate with national respiratory patient organisations to **raise awareness of and improve education about severe asthma** for everyone living with the condition

5 **tackle inequities and disparities** in access to severe asthma care by targeting communities with the poorest outcomes

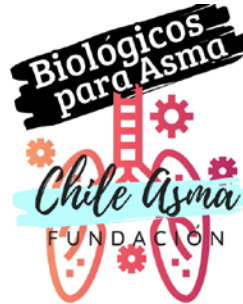
6 **develop comprehensive national respiratory disease strategies** that enable reliable data collection and include specific, measurable goals for the prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and care of severe asthma



This call to action has been endorsed by:



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of West Africa



HOPE LIFE INTERNATIONAL

(Hope, Life, Charity)

...Caring, improving the health and quality of life



This call to action has been endorsed by:

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