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CONTACTS: Michelle Blundell

P: 202-478-6176 E: mblundell@mrss.com

Stephanie Goldina | American Lung Association

P: 312-801-7629 E: Media@Lung.org

21 Health and Medical Groups Speak Out Against EPA Finalizing a Rule that Could Undermine the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards

Babies, children, and pregnant women are among those most threatened by this rule

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 16, 2020) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a final rule that threatens to undermine the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. The American Lung Association, Allergy & Asthma Network, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, American Medical Women's Association, American Public Health Association, American Thoracic Society, Association of Schools and Programs of Public

Health, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Center for Climate Change and Health, Children's Environmental Health Network, Health Care Without Harm, March of Dimes, Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health, National Association of County & City Health Officials, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Environmental Health Association, National WIC Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Trust for America's Health issued the following statement in opposition:

"The rule EPA announced today goes against scientific evidence, and devalues and endangers the health of babies, children, pregnant women, and many other vulnerable populations.

"Limits on mercury and air toxics are backed by the health and medical community, members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, faith-based organizations, and even many electric power companies. These protections have been in place for eight years. They are working to keep our air clean and safe.

"Rather than uphold its mission to protect the environment, today the EPA announced a rule that could erode public health and set a dangerous precedent. The agency rejected scientific evidence showing that limits on mercury and air toxics are 'appropriate and necessary' to protect health, claiming that the costs of the standards outweigh the benefits. This is wholly inaccurate.

"Without question, the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards are 'appropriate and necessary.' These protections are already fully implemented and remarkably successful, preventing up to 11,000 premature deaths each year and dramatically reducing mercury pollution, a potent neurotoxin that causes brain damage in babies.

"Additionally, significant reductions have been achieved in emissions of known carcinogens such as arsenic, chromium and nickel, as well as harmful acid gases that form particle pollution, which causes asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death.

"America's babies are healthier, and our air is cleaner, thanks to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards. Our organizations strongly oppose EPA's effort to jeopardize these lifesaving and successful limits on toxic pollution from power plants. We will explore all available steps to ensure the continued enforcement of these protections."

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