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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 14, 2011

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WASHINGTON BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVE "ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOL AWARD"

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — The Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey (PACNJ), sponsored by the American Lung Association in New Jersey (ALANJ), honored Washington Borough Public Schools with the "Asthma Friendly School Award," applauding their effort in qualifying. This award was given in recognition of the school's efforts to enhance the quality of education for students and staff that face the challenges of asthma. As part of this commitment to excellence, Washington Borough Public Schools completed **Six Steps** toward establishing an asthma friendly school environment mandated by the state and has become part of the nearly 15% of schools throughout New Jersey to qualify for the award.

In response to the New Jersey laws stating that students with asthma are permitted to carry their inhalers at school, and the requirement that school staff be given annual in-service training on asthma management, PACNJ developed educational programs that build a partnership with students, staff, physicians and families to work as a team to manage asthma in the school setting. Both schools in the district completed the educational programs and took a proactive approach to implement a program on indoor air quality by signing the *No-Idling Pledge* for school buses in an effort to reduce pollutants that can trigger asthma episodes, and by establishing an Indoor Air Quality Team in their school. Taking these steps can lead to a reduction in school absenteeism as well as a decrease in the number of asthma episodes.

With over 70 members serving on six task forces, the Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey is working with schools, physicians, health insurance companies, community groups and environment agencies to reach all individuals in New Jersey with the most effective strategies for managing their asthma. Asthma is a chronic disease in which airway inflammation makes breathing difficult when a person is exposed to a variety of triggers. It is a serious condition that needs on-going medical care and patient education on how to manage asthma in the home and school settings. Schools can play a major role in keeping children with asthma safe and healthy and actively involved in everyday activities.

To learn more about how to control asthma, what triggers asthma, and how to make New Jersey schools "asthma friendly", contact the Pediatric/Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey at www.pacnj.org or info@pacnj.org. Additional information on asthma, tobacco control and the environment is available from the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA or by logging onto www.lungusa.org.

