



## *media release*

Children to benefit as asthma plan set to save millions

**Many thousands of people across the country, especially children, will benefit immediately from the introduction of low-cost asthma ‘spacers’ that greatly improve the delivery of inhaled medications, the peak body for Aboriginal health has announced.**

NACCHO said the introduction of affordable asthma ‘spacers’ was also likely to save the health system millions of dollars in coming years through improved primary health care delivery and better patient self-management of asthma.

(A ‘spacer’ is a plastic device which acts as a holding chamber for asthma medications and ensures that they go directly into the lower airways, rather than into patients’ throats. Prior to the introduction of the low-cost ‘spacers’ many asthma patients were forced to use soft drink bottles to inhale their medicine.)

NACCHO Chairman, Henry Councillor, said a cooperative agreement between NACCHO, OATSIH (Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health) and the Asthma Foundations had enabled Aboriginal community controlled health services to save up to 65% on the cost of the ‘spacers’ as a result of bulk ordering.

Mr Councillor said that the self-management of asthma would be vastly improved now that the ‘spacers’ were more affordable and accessible, and the pain and distress experienced by thousands of asthma patients would be greatly reduced.

“We’re delighted at the partnership we have forged with OATSIH and the Asthma Foundations and believe that this indicates a new climate of understanding and cooperation with regard to Aboriginal health,” he said.

“Asthma is an increasing problem across the world and this initiative will go a long way to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people right across the country.”

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