

Testimony of Susan Buchanan, MD, MPH  
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US EPA Hearings – Clean Energy Rule (ACE)  
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Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to make my voice heard on this critical issue. My name is Susan Buchanan and I am a physician and educator in Chicago. I have board certification in Family Medicine and practiced on the west side of Chicago for nine years. In that practice, I cared for many patients struggling with asthma that was not responsive to medication. On hot, humid, summer days, children would sit in our procedure room on nebulizer machines as we tried to control their wheezing and shortness of breath. Sometimes we had to call 911.

In those days I was basically too immersed in the busyness of my everyday practice to reflect on the reasons that so many of my patients in the Humboldt Park neighborhood couldn't seem to gain control over their symptoms. Then I returned to graduate school in public health and completed a residency in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, a sub-specialty of Preventive Medicine. Board certification in this specialty means I have an understanding of how exposure to chemicals, pollutants, and other hazards in the workplace and communities, can lead to health outcomes such as cancer, abnormal brain development, and asthma. I am able to interpret the scientific literature to tease out the strengths and weaknesses in the methods and whether the conclusions really do reflect what was found in the statistical analysis of the data.

Which brings me to the Clean Power Plan. We know that air pollution causes asthma attacks. We know that children and adults sometimes die from asthma attacks. We know that on the days when the air quality is worse there are more emergency room visits for wheezing. None of these statements is biased, political, or subject to disagreement in the medical community or scientific literature. We also know that implementation of the Clean Power Plan would decrease particulate matter in the air, which would decrease asthma attacks. People like me, who have seen first hand the effects of air quality on our patients, were thrilled to see President Obama's efforts to improve conditions for our patients. I strongly urge USEPA to continue with implementation of the Clean Power Plan.