Residential Air Purifiers: Product Performance and Safety (RAPPPS)

Methodology

To produce the materials for this project we collected information from a variety of sources, including interviews with experts, focus group discussions with community health workers, peer-reviewed articles, trusted product review websites, and publications from agencies such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

First, we gathered background information from existing resources. Then we interviewed indoor air quality experts and experts in air cleaner technologies. Following this, we held two focus groups discussions with community health workers (CHWs) with asthma programs, who are our target audience. The first meeting focused on what information CHWs needed to know about air cleaners, what aspects concerned them and their clients, and how best to present the information.

From these meetings we decided to recommend that asthma programs select air cleaners that meet the following criteria:

- Mechanical air cleaners with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) Filters or filters MERV 13 and higher
- A maximum noise level of 55 decibels (dB) or lower
- Initial unit costs under $250
- CARB certified

Our first list of products came from expert recommendations and asthma programs. We cross-checked our list against the Clean Air Stars dataset, Wirecutter, and Consumer Reports—adding and removing products accordingly.

Once a full draft of the factsheet and spreadsheet was developed, a second CHW focus group reviewed it. In these discussions we wanted to ensure user-friendliness, clarity, and usefulness.

RAMP is very grateful to the following people for their time and expertise:

- Ashley Kissinger, California Department of Public Health
- Barbara Spark
- Bonnie Holmes-Gen, California Air Resources Board
- Dr. Amara Holder, US Environmental Protection Agency
- Dr. Brent Stephens, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Dr. Brett Singer, Lawrence Berkeley Lab
- Dr. Mohammed Heidarinejad, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Dr. Seung-Hyun Cho, Research Triangle Institute
- Geraldina Grunbaum, Bay Area Air Quality Management District
RAMP would also like to thank the following community health workers for their time and expertise:

- Balqiso Hussein, Somali Family Services
- Beatriz Rivera, El Concilio
- Brenda Wadsworth, Roots Community Health Center
- Chea Chen, APSARA
- Gladys Privado, San Mateo County Department of Public Health
- Janet Herrera, Central California Asthma Collaborative
- Johnathon Barreto, Sigma Beta Xi/ BreatheIE
- Moriah Partida, International Rescue Committee
- Mustafa Faizi, Somali Family Services
- Nora Beltran, El Sol
- Robin Baker, McKinleyville Family Resource Center
- Rosa Elena Reyes Quintanilla, Alameda Alliance for Health
- Sally Martin-Winter, Central California Asthma Collaborative
- Salma Jama, Somali Family Services, San Diego
- Sarong Sim, APSARA
- Susan Carranza, Vision y Compromiso
- Valerie Andrews, JUDAH project
- Veronica Ramirez, Central California Asthma Collaborative
- Yonas Gabremichael, Alameda County Department of Public Health
- Yururia Lopez, Vision y Compromiso

RAMP extends appreciation to the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment for funding that supported this project, as well as to the many partners who provided valuable input and feedback on this project. The views expressed in this document are solely those of Regional Asthma Management & Prevention, the Public Health Institute.