

Contact: Sarajane Sparks
sarajane@sparkscg.com
603-494-2755



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The **asthma & allergy friendly**[®] Certification Program announces a new certification standard in response to increasing pollen counts and pollen allergies

New certification standard ensures window pollen screens block the passage of pollen to support healthier indoor spaces

Washington, D.C. – May 16, 2023 - The **asthma & allergy friendly**[®] Certification Program, managed by Allergy Standards Ltd (ASL) and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), is excited to announce a new **asthma & allergy friendly**[®] certification standard for window-mounted pollen screens.

The new standard ensures that any pollen-blocking window screens that earn the **asthma & allergy friendly**[®] certification mark must pass rigorous scientific testing standards to prove that they:

- Can effectively block the passage of pollen
- Can be cleaned of captured pollen for lasting performance
- Have a low presence of allergenic chemicals and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions

“Pollen seasons are getting more intense and longer due to climate change. Pollen is the most common source of seasonal allergies and can trigger allergic asthma,” shared Kenneth Mendez, CEO and president of AAFA. “Allergen avoidance in the home is an important part of asthma and allergy management plans – but many people do not have air conditioning to cool their homes when it’s hot. The new window-mounted pollen screen certification standard is an important step to promote accessible options to people with asthma and allergies.”

It is recommended that people with pollen allergies keep their windows closed during pollen season or at peak pollen times. However, pollen screens can be installed in window frames to help prevent pollen from entering the indoor environment from outdoors, enabling people with pollen allergies to open their windows and ventilate their indoor environment.

"Over 100 million people in the United States have an allergic disease – with 81 million people affected by allergic rhinitis caused by pollen allergy. It is prudent to have a certification standard that scientifically validates a pollen screen as being an effective filter," said Dr. John McKeon, CEO of ASL. "These products fall between a building material and an interior furnishing, and since the **asthma & allergy friendly®** Certification Program has certification standards in both categories, we are well-placed to bring together elements from both in this new standard."

The new window-mounted pollen screen certification standard involves a three-step testing process.

- First, the screens are tested for their ability to block the passage of pollen. Testing involves three types of pollen – one tree pollen, one grass pollen, and one weed pollen – to capture the major groups of pollens. The screens must effectively block all three types of pollen to receive certification.
- Second, the removal of pollen from the screen by cleaning is tested. To ensure lasting performance of a pollen screen, it must be possible to remove captured pollen to maintain ventilation while retaining performance.
- Last, the chemical make-up of the product is assessed for the presence of allergenic chemicals and emissions of VOCs to make sure they are below certification levels.

After undergoing and passing this strict testing process, manufacturers and retailers can now offer CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly®** window-mounted pollen screens that provide an accessible and lower-cost option for people with pollen allergies.

###

About the asthma & allergy friendly® Certification Program

The **asthma & allergy friendly®** Certification Program is a unique, ground-breaking collaboration between the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America and Allergy Standards Limited. This program helps people make informed purchases for a healthier home. The program tests household products against strict standards. Products passing these tests earn the CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly®** mark. Certified products include air cleaners, bedding, cleaning products, flooring, paints, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, and more. Visit aafa.org/certified for more information.