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## Media Release

### Auckland leads global asthma fight

A new global campaign to combat asthma is being led from Auckland.

Professor Innes Asher, head of Paediatrics at the University of Auckland is the Chair of the Global Asthma Network.

This week, Professor Asher and her colleagues around the world, will launch the Global Asthma Report 2014, a cutting edge overview of issues about asthma globally.

“Political commitment and action are required to make the burden of asthma a thing of the past,” says Professor Asher. “The Global Asthma Report 2014 makes many recommendations to the World Health Organization (WHO), governments, health authorities and health professionals, which, if followed, will massively reduce the serious burden of asthma globally.”

Asthma is a huge problem in the world, causing wheezing and difficulty breathing. It is a common chronic disease and cause of disability affecting 334 million people of all ages in all parts of the world.

“Millions of people suffer from asthma because they do not get access to the medicines that lessen their breathing difficulties,” she says. “Economies suffer because asthma keeps people away from work, or if they are at work, asthma stops them working effectively.”

The economic burden of asthma in Europe was estimated at 19 billion Euros for 2011 alone.

“Avoidable asthma deaths are still occurring due to inappropriate management of asthma, including over-reliance on reliever medication rather than preventer medication,” says Professor Asher. “Asthma is a particularly serious burden in low- and middle-income countries least able to afford the costs.”

Good long-term management can reduce the burden of asthma, she says. This includes using relatively simple measures within a systematic national or local strategy which can improve early detection of asthma and provide effective preventive treatment.

“Quality-assured essential asthma medicines are not available to many people with asthma,” says Professor Asher. “Guaranteed access to quality-assured essential asthma medicines is vital to improving asthma outcomes.

Asthma which is well controlled imposes far less of an economic and personal burden than non-controlled asthma.

“While our knowledge has increased, the remaining gaps in the data about asthma are significant. New surveys are needed to update asthma trends, assess the burden of asthma, access to effective management and understand the causes,” she says. “The Global Asthma Network is working towards closing the data gaps.”

### For more information contact;

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