

March 4, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers,
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room H-305
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran,
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20514

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey,
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations,
Minority
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski,
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations,
Minority
The Capitol, Room S-146A
Washington, DC 20514

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cochran, Ranking Member Lowey and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

As organizations committed to protecting the public's health, we would like to draw your attention to the critical need for additional funding for Fiscal Year 2016 to fully implement the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which strengthens and modernizes the regulatory, administrative, and information-technology systems that ensure the safety of our food supply.

Foodborne illness remains a major public health threat. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that contaminated food causes 48 million foodborne illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and as many as 3,000 deaths nationwide every year. These preventable illnesses inflict untold suffering and drive avoidable health system-related costs of about \$70 billion each year. Everyone is at risk for food poisoning, but young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with weak immune systems are at particular risk of severe infection and more serious outcomes.

In 2011, Congress wisely enacted FSMA, which fundamentally changes the FDA's approach to food safety, allowing the agency to focus on *preventing* food safety problems before they make people sick, rather than reacting to illnesses after they occur. The law also directs the agency to create a comprehensive food import oversight system which, for the first time, makes importers responsible for the safety of the food products they bring into the United States.

FDA's efforts to modernize its regulatory systems and workforce to meet this public health challenge begin this year in earnest with the finalization of the implementing rules that govern FSMA's scope and impact. We are encouraged by the President's substantial budget request of \$109.5 million in new Budget Authority (BA) for FDA food safety and we understand that this request reflects FDA's urgent need to invest immediately to get FSMA up and running to secure our food supply. As you begin your work on Agriculture Appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2016, we strongly urge you to meet the President's request.

We thank you for your leadership and your support for FSMA implementation since the law's enactment. We welcome your ongoing interest in further reducing preventable foodborne illnesses through this important public health investment and we look forward to your continued support for FDA's food safety efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments (ANHE)
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
American Academy of Sports Dieticians and Nutritionists (AASDN)
American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM)
American Gastroenterological Association (AGA)
American Geriatrics Society (AGS)
American Public Health Association (APHA)
American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN)
Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN)
Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention (CFI)
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)
The Food Laboratory Alliance (FLA)
Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
National Indian Health Board (NIHB)
North American Society for Pediatric
Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHN)
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS)
NSF International
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)
Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA)