

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
Health and Human Services, and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for food allergy research in Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations

Dear Chairs Aderholt, Calvert, and Harris; and Ranking Members DeLauro, McCollum, and Bishop:

The undersigned groups write to thank you for your previous support in prioritizing food allergy research issues and encourage you to continue the momentum across the federal government as you work towards the fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations.

Recent studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open* estimate that nearly 34 million Americans have life-threatening food allergies, accounting for 7.6 percent of children and 10.8 percent of adults. Food allergies are also becoming increasingly common. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports the prevalence of food allergies in children increased by 50 percent between 1997 and 2011. Between 1997 and 2008, the prevalence of peanut or tree nut allergy appears to have more than tripled in U.S. children.

Allergic reactions to food can have deadly consequences when left untreated. In fact, 40 percent of children with food allergies have experienced a severe reaction, such as anaphylaxis. Each year, more than 200,000 Americans require emergency medical care for allergic reactions to food; this is equivalent to one trip to the emergency room every three minutes. This health condition comes at a high cost—a JAMA Pediatrics study estimated the annual expense of food allergies to the American economy as more than \$25 billion, including lost labor productivity.

Food allergies disproportionately impact low-income communities of color, especially Black Americans who have experienced the most rapid rise in prevalence of food allergies. In addition, Black Americans report higher rates of food allergy, higher frequency of severe allergic reactions, higher rates of food

allergy-related treatment in the emergency department, and higher rates of fatal food-induced anaphylaxis. Similarly, data shows that food allergies are more prevalent among Hispanic Americans compared to White Americans.

As you may know, in FY2005, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) established the Consortium on Food Allergy Research (CoFAR) within the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). CoFAR has identified genes associated with an increased risk for peanut allergy and has also identified the most promising routes, doses, and durations of egg and peanut immunotherapy for further study, among many other accomplishments. In 2017, NIH announced its intention to award CoFAR \$42.7 million over seven years so that it may continue evaluating new approaches to treat food allergy. Continued investment in food allergy research through CoFAR and NIAID has the potential to make serious strides towards understanding the causes of, and developing treatments for, this widespread and under-researched condition. The sharp increase in prevalence over the past two decades indicates a trend that merits further investigation.

We appreciate that in FY2024, the committee recognized the serious issue of food allergies and included \$12.1 million for CoFAR in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024* enacted last month. This funding supports the continued planned expansion of CoFAR's clinical research network, including adding new centers of excellence in food allergy clinical care.

To continue the momentum in food allergy research and protect consumers, the undersigned organizations write to express strong support for the following FY2025 appropriations requests:

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES (LHHS)

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

- We respectfully request **robust funding for CoFAR within NIAID at the level of \$18.2 million in FY2025** – an increase of \$6.1 million in order to reflect the increasing rate of food allergies in Americans. This modest investment will fund groundbreaking research that gets us closer to fully understanding, treating, and ultimately curing food allergies.
- Additionally, we request the following subcommittee **report language** reflecting the importance of NIH engaging in trans-NIH research on food allergies:

***Food Allergies.**— The Committee recognizes the serious issue of food allergies which affect approximately eight percent of children and ten percent of adults in the U.S. The Committee commends the ongoing work of NIAID in supporting a total of 17 clinical sites for this critical research, including seven sites as part of the Consortium of Food Allergy Research (CoFAR). The Committee includes \$18,200,000, an increase of \$6,100,000, for CoFAR to expand its clinical research network to add new centers of excellence in food allergy clinical care and to select such centers from those with a proven expertise in food allergy research.*

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- Additionally, we request the Committee allocate \$5.5 million to the CDC’s Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion account in FY2025 for a school-based effort to address food allergies and reduce potentially anaphylactic reactions. We thank the committee for including \$2 million for the CDC’s Healthy Schools program in FY2024 for a school-based effort to address food allergies and reduce potentially anaphylactic reactions. To expand upon the work of CDC, we request that you include the following report language reflecting the importance of these efforts:

Food Allergies.—The Committee recognizes the serious issue of food allergies, which affect approximately eight percent of children in the U.S. The Committee includes a total of \$5,500,000, an increase of \$3,500,000, in Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion funding designated for a school-based effort to address food allergies and reduce potentially fatal anaphylactic reactions.

DEFENSE

- We respectfully request that **food allergies be maintained on the list of conditions to be eligible for research under the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP)**. The PRMRP is a valuable program within DoD, offering creative, long-term insights into significant medical issues like food allergies that affect members of the armed services and their families and do not always receive the investments they require in the private sector. DoD study of food allergies is not a new idea. In FY2009, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) established the Genetic Studies of Food Allergy Research Program (GSFARP) with a \$2.5 million appropriation “to provide support for scientifically meritorious genetic research focused on food allergies.” We greatly appreciate that food allergies were included under the PRMRP in FY2020 after a four-year hiatus from program eligibility and urge you to maintain this eligibility in FY2025. This renewed investment in food allergy research through the PRMRP has the potential to make serious strides towards understanding the causes of, and developing treatments for, this widespread and under-researched condition.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, & RELATED AGENCIES

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

- We respectfully request that the committee include **report language encouraging the emphasis of early introduction of potentially allergenic foods in the upcoming 10-year review of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**. We thank the committee for including language in the FY2024 committee report that emphasized the importance of early introduction. With the required 10-year review of the WIC program, historically conducted by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), about to begin, we ask for the inclusion of the following report language to ensure that the program reflects the most recent data on early introduction:

Early Introduction.—The Committee recognizes that Section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act (42.U.S.C. § 1786. (c)(11)(C)) directs the Secretary to conduct a scientific review of the WIC food packages no fewer than every 10 years, and that the next scientific review is set to

be released in 2027. Given the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommended the early introduction of potentially allergenic foods to infants, especially peanut and egg, to prevent allergies later in life, the Committee directs the Secretary to include a review and recommendations for the early introduction of food allergens in the upcoming review of the WIC infant food packages.

On behalf of the patients we serve, thank you for your leadership in supporting food allergy research. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the undersigned organizations, should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

AAAAI, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

ACAAI, the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

AAN, the Allergy & Asthma Network

APFED, the American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders

AAFA, the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America

CURED, Campaign Urging Research in Eosinophilic Disorders

FARE, Food Allergy Research & Education

FAACT, the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Connection Team

I-FPIES, the International Food Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome Association