

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and
Drug Administration Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and
Drug Administration Appropriations
Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for food allergy research in Fiscal Year 2024 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 2024 (FY2024) appropriations.

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. About 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: equivalent to one trip to the emergency room every three minutes.

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 FY2023, the committee recognized the serious issue of food allergies and included \$12.1 million for CoFAR in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023* enacted in December. This funding increase supports the 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 FY24 appropriations requests:

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

- We respectfully request **robust funding for CoFAR within NIAID at the level of \$18.2 million in FY24** – 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 you include 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.*

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 FY09, 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 FY20 after a four-year hiatus from program eligibility and urge you to maintain this eligibility in FY24. 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, AND RELATED AGENCIES

- In April 2021, the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research (FASTER) Act was signed into law which added sesame to the list of major food allergens subject to certain Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and labeling requirements. While this was a major victory for Americans living with food allergies, some manufacturers have recently started adding sesame to their products without proper disclosure to consumers. Therefore, we respectfully request that the subcommittee include **bill language to ensure a precautionary allergen labeling policy and prevent mislabeling that may harm consumers**. Such language should:
 - Require the FDA to re-clarify that sesame may not be added to ingredient lists when it is not in fact an ingredient;
 - Require the FDA to convene allergy experts and prevention control experts to identify a solution to sesame mislabeling that prioritizes consumer health, safety, and consumer choice; and
 - Require the FDA to identify and implement a precautionary allergen labeling policy that is mandatory, consistent, and evidence-based, centering the informational and health needs of consumers.

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,

[American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#)

[American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#)

[Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America \(AAFA\)](#)

[American Partnership For Eosinophilic Disorders \(APFED\)](#)

[CURED Nfp \(Campaign Urging Research for Eosinophilic Disease\)](#)

[Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Connection Team \(FAACT\)](#)

[FARE \(Food Allergy Research & Education\)](#)

[IFPIES \(International FPIES Association\)](#)