

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman,  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman,  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman,  
Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member,  
Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Ranking Member,  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Support for food allergy research in FY2021 appropriations**

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt, and Ranking Members Leahy, Murray, and Durbin:

The undersigned groups urge you to continue to prioritize food allergy research across the federal government as you work towards the fiscal year 2021 (FY21) appropriations.

The Centers for Disease Control & 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.

In 2005, 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.

In light of these concerns, the undersigned organizations write to express strong support for the following FY21 appropriations requests:

## Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS)

- We respectfully request you **support robust funding for CoFAR within NIAID at the level of \$12.2 million in FY21** – an annual 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 United States. 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 \$12,200,000, 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 FY21. 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.

On behalf of the patients we serve, thank you for your leadership in giving food allergies the research attention they need. 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  
Allergy & Asthma Network  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Connection Team  
Food Allergy Research and Education  
International FPIES Association