



Ensure Adequate Funding for Food Allergy Research

REQUEST

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) urges your support of requests to prioritize food allergy research during the fiscal year 2020 (FY20) appropriations process. AAAAI asks that Congress: (1) add food allergies to the list of conditions eligible for research under the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program in the Department of Defense; (2) ensure adequate federal funding for the Consortium on Food Allergy Research (CoFAR) from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), and (3) include report language urging the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support robust investment in food allergies.

SUMMARY

AAAAI strongly supports the following FY20 appropriations requests related to food allergy research:

Defense

- **Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP):** AAAAI strongly supports the request made by Reps. Ro Khanna (D-CA), Phil Roe (R-TN), Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and others to **re-establish food allergies as eligible for research funding under the PRMRP**. 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.

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

- **Funding:** AAAAI supports a funding increase of \$6.1 million annually for the Consortium on Food Allergy Research (CoFAR) from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), as requested by Reps. Ro Khanna (D-CA), Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH), Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and others. CoFAR funds groundbreaking research that furthers the understanding and treatment of food allergies.
- **Report Language:** AAAAI thanks the House Appropriations Committee for including the following report language, which also has been requested by Sen. Blumenthal for consideration in the Senate Labor/HHS bill.

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 urges NIH to support robust investment 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.*

BACKGROUND

Food allergies affect 32 million Americans, including 6 million children. 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. The **Consortium on Food Allergy Research (CoFAR)** was

established by NIAID in 2005. Over the following 14 years, CoFAR discovered genes associated with an increased risk for peanut allergy and has also identified the most promising potential treatments for egg and peanut immunotherapy, among many other accomplishments. Breakthroughs like these, scaled across other major food allergies, can significantly improve the quality of life for tens of millions of Americans. CoFar has been able to make significant strides in the study of food allergy prevention and treatment of food allergies with a relatively small annual budget of \$6.1 million. Ensuring adequate investment in this under-researched field, which affects 10.8 percent of the U.S. population, would enable even more life-saving research.

The **Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP)** is a valuable program within the Department of Defense (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. Enhanced DoD focus on 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.” In FY10, the appropriation was \$1.875 million. Specific line item funding ended in FY11, but for FY12 and FY16, food allergies were eligible for research under the PRMRP.

CONTACT

For additional information or if you have any questions, please contact Sheila C. Heitzig, JD, MNM CAE, AAAAI’s Director of Practice & Policy at 414-272-6071 or sheitzig@aaaai.org.