

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services, and Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We write to thank you for your leadership in championing investment in food allergy research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As you consider the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request you support a support robust funding for the Consortium of Food Allergy Research within the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease at the level of \$85.4 million over the next seven years – an annual increase of \$6.1 million in order to reflect the increasing rate of food allergies in Americans.

A study recently published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open* found a far higher prevalence of food allergies among American adults than previously revealed: about 10.8 percent – or 26 million – reported having a convincing food allergy. According to Food Allergy and Research Education (FARE), another 5.9 million children under the age of 18 also suffer from food allergies. That is one in 13 children or roughly two in every classroom. 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 children in the U.S. There is no U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved treatment for food allergy yet available.

Left untreated, allergic reactions to food can have deadly consequences. 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. That is one trip to the emergency room every three minutes.

In 2005, 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 an 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 is a disturbing trend that needs further investigation and the requisite resources properly address what is at risk of becoming a public health crisis.

We therefore respectfully request an increase of CoFAR's budget to \$85.4 million over the next seven years. At \$12.2 million annually, this modest investment will fund groundbreaking research that gets us closer to fully understanding, treating, and ultimately curing food allergies. Already, CoFAR has

made important advances, such as the demonstrated success of the [four-year egg oral immunotherapy \(eOIT\)](#) treatment, which allowed certain participants to safely reintroduce egg into their diet after years of abstinence. As one of the most common food allergies which often appears in early childhood, egg allergy carries the risk of severe reaction and can negatively affect the quality of life for children and adults with the allergy. Breakthroughs like the eOIT treatment, scaled across other major food allergies, can significantly improve the quality of life for tens of millions of Americans.

We thank you for your attention to our concerns, and we look forward to working with you to invest in research that will lead to effective treatments and ultimately, a cure, for life-altering food allergies.

Sincerely,

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress